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A HISTORY OF ZOROASTRIANISM

LEIDEN/KÖLN
E. J. BRILL
1975

A HISTORY OF ZOROASTRIANISM

BY

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in the University of London

VOLUME ONE
THE EARLY PERIOD

LEIDEN/KÖLN
E. J. BRILL
1975

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Dedicated

(according to the order of our meeting)
to those of my Zoroastrian friends to whom
this history of their faith owes most

Arbab Jamshed Sorush Sorushian of Kerman
Agha Rustam Noshiravan Belivani of Sharifabad
Dastur Khodadad Shehriar Neryosangi of Yazd
Ervad Dr. Firoze Meherji Kotwal of Navsari

CONTENTS

Foreword ix
Abbreviations xv

PART ONE
THE PAGAN BACKGROUND

I. General 3
II. The gods of pagan Iran 22
III. Demons and evil-doing, fabulous creatures, first men and heroes 85
IV. Death, the hereafter and funeral rites 109
V. The nature of the world and its origins 130
VI. The pagan cult 147

PART TWO
ZOROASTER AND HIS TEACHINGS

VII. Zoroaster 181
VIII. Ahura Mazdā, Angra Mainyu and the Bounteous Immortals 192
IX. The two states and the three times 229

PART THREE
THE PREHISTORIC PERIOD OF THE FAITH

X. The unrecorded centuries 249
XI. The legends of Zoroaster and his sons 277
XII. The laws of purity 294
Excursus: the Zoroastrian funeral rites 325

Select Bibliography 331
Index 334

FOREWORD

The serious study of Zoroastrianism in the West is scarcely two hundred years old, for it is founded on the interpretation of the Zoroastrian holy books, called collectively the *Avesta*, which remained unknown outside the community itself until the late 18th century. From the days of ancient Greece Zoroaster's own name had been familiar to the learned as that of a fabled Eastern sage; and when the *Avesta* came at last into scholars' hands, they sought eagerly in it for teachings which would justify this fame. At the time European men of letters acknowledged the twofold authority of Christianity and Reason, that of the former being as yet unchallenged by scientific advance; and Zoroaster's faith, since it had been propounded by one of the great teachers of mankind, was expected to be of a kind which a rational Christian could approve. There was dismay when its scriptures showed it to be on the contrary in many respects remote and strange. For one thing, it was a faith which acknowledged, under God, many lesser divine beings, who were reverenced with a wealth of complex rituals and observances. Christianity and acquaintance with Greek mythology had combined to create in Europe a conviction that polytheism belonged to the childlike past of the human race, having been superseded for all advanced peoples by monotheism. Protestant Christianity, moreover (in which faith most Western interpreters of Zoroastrianism were reared), had no high regard for ritualism, even in the worship of a single God. To accept Zoroastrianism as it was, and to try to understand Zoroaster's teachings with the help of the living tradition, proved accordingly too much for the West; and a solution to the resulting dilemma was eventually found, in the middle of the 19th century, by the brilliant philologist Martin Haug. By painstaking study he isolated the *Gāthās* (a group of seventeen ancient hymns) as the only part of the *Avesta* which could be regarded as the direct utterance of Zoroaster; and he then proceeded, in all sincerity, to interpret these archaic and very difficult texts (concerning whose translation no two scholars to this day agree) independently from the actual beliefs and practices of Zoroaster's followers, whose forbears, he thought, must have early corrupted their prophet's teachings. Struggling as a pioneer with these baffling hymns, Haug managed to understand Zoroaster to have preached a strict monotheism—stricter even than that of the Hebrew prophets—rejecting while he did so all rituals of sacrifice and worship, apart from prayer. He assumed, that is, that the

prophet of ancient Iran had been the bearer of a rational and ethical theism, which was so remote from the concepts and customs of his own people that, though they brought themselves to accept his teachings, they could not long live with their austerity, but soon distorted them, relapsing more or less into their former beliefs and ways.

One consequence of this simplification of Zoroaster's message was that it delayed recognition of his vital part in shaping those Messianic and eschatological doctrines which were to have so great an influence on later Judaeism, Christianity and Islam. In seeking to exalt the prophet's stature, Haug in fact diminished his role in the history of human thought. His thesis proved, however, a potent factor in the development of Zoroastrian studies, and even in that of modern Zoroastrianism. In Europe it was adopted by a number of leading scholars, who were happy to be enabled thus to view Zoroaster in a way acceptable to their own time and culture; and in India, where Haug expounded it in person in the 1860's, it was warmly welcomed by one group of Zoroastrians themselves. This was composed of Parsis who had received a Western education in Bombay, and who found in Haug's theories a swift and radical solution to a problem that had been tormenting them, namely how to reconcile the elaborate doctrines and usages of their venerable faith with 19th-century scientific thought, and to maintain its dignity against the assaults of Protestant Christian missionaries. They gave ardent support to the idea thus presented to them that Zoroaster had not been even a dualist—a doctrinal position abhorrent to the proselytizing Christians—but had taught a very simple faith, free from all ritualism and subtleties of dogma. Hence to become his true disciples they had only to reform the existing religion on this basis, making it once more a creed to which any thinking man who was not an atheist could readily adhere.

These reformists, setting vigorously about their task, expressed themselves mostly in English, and so it was their voices which were chiefly heard in the West, where by a circular process they were welcomed as confirming scholarly interpretations of their ancient faith. Within their own community they met, however, with strenuous opposition from those, both learned and simple, who were not so ready to abandon the beliefs and customs of their forefathers for a religion newly defined at a European desk. In Europe too the school of rational theism had its sturdy critics, some of whom went to the other extreme, seeing in early Zoroastrianism a traditional polytheism not far removed from the beliefs of Vedic India. The scholarly disputes of the nineteenth century lasted into the twentieth, as did the religious controversies among the Parsis; and

the difficulty of finding common ground led to ever-new interpretations being propounded in both Europe and India, some of which seem strangely remote from the realities of Zoroastrian scripture or tradition. In general Western scholarship has tended, naturally enough, to concern itself with texts rather than with practice, and with doctrine and mythology rather than with the devotional life of the faith; and these limitations have made it all the easier for free rein to be given to fantasy.

While theories about Zoroastrianism have multiplied in the present century, so too has actual knowledge of the religion in all its aspects, through the work of philologists, historians, archaeologists and numismatists, and above all that of Zoroastrian scholars themselves, who, overcoming a habit of reticence engrained by centuries of persecution, have described their own ceremonies and customs, and have published many previously-unknown secondary texts, thus sharing their religious heritage with the outside world. It has not always been easy, however, for Western scholars to use these books, particularly those which expound rituals, since these assume both basic knowledge and also religious attitudes unfamiliar to the non-Zoroastrian. Some have, therefore, remained virtually unstudied, and early misconceptions have thus managed to persist despite new sources of knowledge.

The only way to gain perspective for assessing recent developments in Zoroastrianism, and at the same time to find means of marshalling the mass of evidence now available for earlier epochs, seemed to be to attempt the writing of a continuous history of the faith, from the time of the prophet to the present day, without leaving (as has been customary) great gaps over which imagination can all too freely leap, such as the 500 years of Parthian rule in Iran, or the first 1,000 years of Zoroastrianism after the coming of Islam. The difficulties in the way of carrying out such a task are plainly formidable, because of the deficiency of the sources; but enough material has by now accumulated for it to seem no longer impossible. In undertaking it the writer started from the premise that Zoroaster's message is more likely to have been understood by his own disciples and followers than by students from a totally different culture and religious heritage, who first came to struggle with it, purely intellectually, millennia after he had preached. Accordingly throughout this work considerable reliance has been placed on the Zoroastrian tradition, which can be shown to have been remarkably strong and consistent at all known periods down to the time of European impact in the mid-19th century.

It was originally intended to preface the present volume with a brief survey of the various interpretations of Zoroastrianism advanced in

recent decades; but it became plain that this could not be usefully done until earlier developments had been traced. This survey will accordingly be set instead as an appendix to the last volume. Naturally incidental references to the views of individual scholars are made throughout the work.

A minor difficulty in attempting a history of Zoroastrianism lies in the transcribing of proper names and technical terms, since the forms of these vary in the different languages concerned, and at different times and places. For the ancient period one has Avestan and Old Persian, to be followed by Parthian and Middle Persian; and in modern times the speech of the Parsi and Irani communities has again diverged. In the present volume Avestan and Middle Persian (Pahlavi) forms have in general been preferred, since the Zoroastrian texts themselves are preserved in those two languages; but even so the nature of the evidence makes it impossible to avoid some mixing of Avestan and Middle Persian terms. In the transcriptions, particular scholarly usages have been avoided where these could be confusing in a general work, notably the rendering of the voiceless velar fricative (i.e. the final sound in Scottish "loch") by "x". This sound is here represented instead by "kh" (except rarely where whole passages of Avestan or Pahlavi have been transcribed). The practice of using "š" for the voiceless palatal fricative seems, however, simple and unambiguous, and has been adopted except initially, since there are several proper and place names beginning with this sound (such as Shapur, Shiraz) which are too well-known not to look odd if so spelt. The signs "č" and "ž" (in preference to "ch" and "zh") have similarly been retained. The transcriptions "ə" for a short indefinite Avestan vowel, and "ŋ" for a modified nasal will not, it is hoped, trouble the general reader.

A far greater problem is presented by the nature of the sources. The Zoroastrian priests were long reluctant to use the alien art of writing to record their sacred texts, and no religious works exist whose written form can be attributed to earlier than the 3rd century A.C. Most of what was written down then and thereafter contains matter which is evidently immeasurably older; and the difficulty is to decide which are the ancient elements in each individual work, and to what epoch they can properly be assigned. It has been usual to deal with this problem by treating all Pahlavi books as products *in toto* of the Sasanian period; but this results in strange anomalies, obliging one, for instance, to expound the immensely archaic cosmology upon which Zoroaster's own teachings rest as if it were the creation of that relatively modern and sophisticated age. Accordingly a different course has been taken in the present work, and comparatively

late sources have been drawn on when necessary, with due caveats, to illustrate what appear to have been the beliefs of prehistoric times.

In the writing of this first volume (and indeed of the history as a whole) I am deeply indebted for help and information, most generously given, to those of my Zoroastrian friends to whom it is dedicated. It is ruefully said nowadays by Zoroastrians themselves that where three of them are gathered together, there will be three different interpretations of their faith; and I cannot therefore expect that the conclusions drawn here should win their assent. I can only hope that they will be recognizable as part of an honest attempt to approach the truth. I further owe a particular debt to my friend Dr. M. I. Scott of the University Library, Cambridge, for her continual help in obtaining books and references, and even more for illuminating discussions of many perplexing points. Professor Paul Thieme has most kindly spared time for correspondence, and has thereby furnished me with help even beyond what I have derived from his penetrating printed works. I owe too a considerable debt to my friend Dr. Ilya Gershevitch, who by fiercely disagreeing with some of my conclusions has provided a needful spur to further reflection and research. I have also enjoyed discussions of archaeological matters with my learned colleague Dr. A. D. H. Bivar, and have had much help from him, and from his former student, Dr. Shapur Shahbazi, now Director of the Institute for Achaemenid Research at Persepolis.

Scholars who have earned my warm gratitude by most kindly sending me references, articles in typescript, rare books or xeroxes relevant to the present volume are Professor Sir Harold Bailey, Professor I. M. Diakonov, Professor J. Duchesne-Guillemin, Mr. Gordon Wasson, Professor Jacob Neusner, Professor R. E. Emmerick, Professor Martin Schwartz, the late Dr. P. K. Anklesaria, Dr. A. Tafazzoli, Miss Helen Potamianos and Mr. Bela Broganski. I owe particular thanks to Mr. J. R. Hinnells for kindly reading proofs of this volume; and to Professor B. Spuler and the house of Brill for the forbearance which they have shown in face of the slow, remorseless growth of this history from the 30 pages originally allotted to Zoroastrianism in the *Handbuch der Orientalistik* to the planned four volumes of the present work.

ABBREVIATIONS

PRIMARY SOURCES

[Where an editor's or translator's name follows in brackets, see under this in the select bibliography]

ĀN	Ātaš Niyāyeš
AVN	Ardāy Vīrāz Nāmag (Jamaspji Asa-Haug)
Dd.	Dādestān ī dīnīg (T. D. Anklesaria)
Dk.	Dīnkard (P. B. and D. P. Sanjana, D. M. Madan)
GBd.	The Greater (or Iranian) Bundahišn (T. D. Anklesaria, B. T. Anklesaria)
Ind. Bd.	The Indian Bundahišn
KB	Kauṣītaki-Brāhmaṇa
KŚS	Kāśyapa-saṃhitā
Mbh.	Mahābhārata
MKh.	Mēnōg ī Khrad (E. W. West)
Nīr.	Nīrangestān (D. P. Sanjana, S. J. Bulsara)
Ny.	Niyāyeš
Pahl. Riv. Ādurfarnbag	The Pahlavi Rivāyat of Ādurfarnbag (B. T. Anklesaria)
Pahl. Riv. Dd.	The Pahlavi Rivāyat accompanying the Dādestān ī dīnīg (B. N. Dhabhar)
Pahl. Riv. Farnbag-Srōš	The Pahlavi Rivāyat of Farnbag-Srōš (B. T. Anklesaria)
Riv.	The Persian Rivāyats (M. R. Unvala, B. N. Dhabhar)
RV	Rigveda
Saddar Bd.	Saddar Bundahišn (B. N. Dhabhar)
Šnš.	Šāyest nē-šāyest (J. C. Tavadia, F. M. Kotwal)
Vd.	Vendidād
Vr.	Visperad
VS	Vājasaneyisaṃhitā
Y	Yasna
YHapt.	Yasna Haptaŋhāiti
Yt.	Yašt
Zādspram	Vizīdagīhā ī Zādspram (B. T. Anklesaria)
ZVYt.	Zand ī Vahman Yašt (B. T. Anklesaria)
ZKh.A	Zand ī Khordag Avestāg (B. N. Dhabhar)

JOURNALS AND OTHER COMPOSITE WORKS

AION	Annali dell' Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli
AKGW zu Göttingen	Akademie der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen
AMI	Archaeologische Mitteilungen aus Iran
APAW	Abhandlungen der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften
ARW	Archiv für Religionswissenschaft
BSO(A)S	Bulletin of the School of Oriental (and African) Studies, London
ERE	Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, ed. J. Hastings, 13 vols., Edinburgh 1908-1926
GIP	Grundriss der iranischen Philologie, herausgegeben von W. Geiger und E. Kuhn, 2 vols., Strassburg 1895-1904
IF	Indogermanische Forschungen
IIJ	Indo-Iranian Journal
JA	Journal asiatique
JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society
JBBRAS	Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society

JCOI	Journal of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute
JNES	Journal of Near Eastern Studies
JRAS	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society
KZ	Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung auf dem Gebiete der Indogermanischen Sprachen, begründet von A. Kuhn
MO	Le Monde orientale
MSS	Münchener Studien zur Sprachwissenschaft
OLZ	Orientalische Literaturzeitung
RHR	Revue de l'histoire des religions
SBE	The Sacred Books of the East, ed. F. Max Müller
SPAW	Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften
TPS	Transactions of the Philological Society, London
WZKM	Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes
WZKSO	Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Süd- und Ostasiens
ZDMG	Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft

OTHER SECONDARY WORKS

For abbreviated titles of books see under the author's or editor's name in the select bibliography at the end of the volume. Abbreviations of authors' and editors' names are also given there.

NOTE

In passages translated from Avestan or Pahlavi an asterisk before a word indicates uncertainty about either its reading or its rendering. With single words an asterisk simply marks a postulated form.

PART ONE

THE PAGAN BACKGROUND

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL

No sound tradition exists about the date of Zoroaster;[1] but the great Iranian prophet cannot be assigned to a time before his people acquired their separate identity in parting from their close cousins, the Indians,[2] and forging their own distinctive languages and culture. For thousands of years, it seems, the Indo-Iranians lived together as nomads on the broad Asian steppes, stretching from the lower Volga eastward to the boundary of Kazakhstan. There they herded long-horned cattle on foot, moving slowly between pastures; and there they gradually evolved a common culture of such strength that elements persisted as a shared heritage long after the two peoples had divided and gone their separate ways. It is generally held that they began to drift apart during the third millennium B.C.; and it is thought that the composition of the oldest Indian work, the Rigveda, should be set as beginning some time around 1700 B.C.[3] The language of its hymns, in their surviving form, is very close to that of the *Gāthās*, the hymns of Zoroaster; and not only the outward form of the prophet's works, but also strikingly archaic elements in their content, make it reasonable to suppose that he himself cannot have lived later than about 1000 B.C.[4] He may in fact have flourished some time earlier. The linguistic evidence shows, moreover, that his home must have been among the Iranians of the north-east; and it is probable that

[1] The two dates which exist, that of 6000 years before Plato (preserved by the Greeks) and that of 258 years before Alexander (to be found in the late Zoroastrian tradition of Sasanian times) both appear to have been calculated from alien data. On these see further p. 286 n. 38 and in Vol. II.

[2] In the following pages the term "Indian" is used, for simplicity's sake, for the Indo-European people who later invaded the Indian sub-continent, and who in other contexts are referred to as "Indo-Aryans", to distinguish them from the indigenous peoples of India.

[3] See the works of H. Jacobi and B. G. Tilak (bibliography apud S. Konow, *Die Inder* (*Lehrbuch der Religionsgeschichte*, begründet von Chantepie de Saussaye, 4th ed., ed. A. Bertholet and E. Lehmann, Tübingen 1925) II 6; W. Wüst, "Über das Alter des Ṛgveda", *WZKM* XXXIV, 1927, 186 f.; G. R. Kaye, *Hindu Astronomy*, *Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India*, No. 18, 1924, 29 ff.; H. W. Bailey in *Literatures of the East*, ed. E. B. Ceadel, Cambridge 1953, 100.

[4] That the date of Zoroaster was somewhere between 1000 and 900 B.C., or perhaps even earlier, was formerly the opinion of most Western scholars, including E. Meyer, F. C. Andreas, C. Clemen, C. Bartholomae, B. Geiger, F. Windischmann, A. B. Keith, J. Charpentier, C. P. Tiele and R. Kent. The support given to the date of "258 years before Alexander" in recent decades is largely due to the powerful advocacy of A. Meillet, E. Herzfeld, S. H. Taqizadeh and W. B. Henning; but the authenticity of this date has latterly been strongly challenged again, see further in Ch. 7, below.

his own people (known as the "Avestan people" from the name of the Zoroastrian scriptures, the Avesta) settled eventually in Khwarezmia, the land along the lower course of the Oxus.[5] Up to the present century little was known of the prehistory of this area, or of the surrounding ancient kingdoms (Bactria, Sogdia and Ferghana to the south-east and east, Parthia and Margiana to the south). All these now form part of Soviet Central Asia, being divided among the territories of the Uzbek, Tajik, Turkmen and Kirghiz republics; and during this century much excavation has been carried out in the region by Soviet archaeologists, through which knowledge has been gained of its remote past.[6]

As for the Indo-Iranians in their nomadic stage, they have been identified as one of the bearers of the Andronovo culture, which in the 2nd millennium B.C. was distinguished by fine tool- and weapon-making in bronze.[7] (The great mace wielded by the Iranian Mithra appears from its fixed poetic description to have been fashioned of this metal.[8]) A slender shaft of light has been thrown on their society by the study of certain legalistic Vedic and Avestan texts,[9] which show that the Indians and Iranians had a common tradition not only of kingship but of high kings, and that the high king's rule was not arbitrary, but was bounded to some extent by undertakings entered into with his vassals, so that he acknowledged obligations as well as exercising rule. This pattern of society appears to have become reflected in that of the gods, for its influence has been traced in the development of beliefs in the *asuras* of the Indo-Iranian

[5] This country first became known to the West through the Greeks, and various other forms of its name are in use, e.g. Chorezm, Choresmia, Khorasmia, Khwarezm. In Old Persian it appears as (H)uvārazmi. On the various grounds for linking the prophet's people with this area see J. Marquart, *Ērānšahr nach der Geographie des Ps. Moses Xorenac'i, AKGW zu Göttingen*, Berlin 1901, 155-6; A. Christensen, *Acta Orientalia* IV, 1926, 82 with n. 1 (who cites also F. C. Andreas); E. Herzfeld, *AMI* I, 1929/1930, 104 n. 2, II, 1930, 4-7; H. W. Bailey, *BSOS* VI, 1932, 951-3; E. Benveniste, *BSOS* VII, 1934, 268-72; W. B. Henning, *Zoroaster, politician or witch-doctor?, Ratanbai Katrak Lectures 1949*, Oxford 1951, 44-5.

[6] A survey of Soviet excavations, with a valuable annotated bibliography, is provided by G. Frumkin, *Archaeology in Soviet Central Asia* (*Handbuch der Orientalistik* VII.3.1, ed. J. E. van Lohuizen-de Leeuw), Leiden 1970. For a more general treatment see A. Belenitsky, *The ancient civilization of Central Asia*, transl. by J. Hogarth, London 1969; V. M. Masson and V. I. Sarianidi, *Central Asia, Turkmenia before the Achaemenids*, transl. by R. Tringham (*Ancient Peoples and Places*, ed. G. Daniel) London 1972.

[7] The great difficulties in definitely identifying a people with a culture known only from material remains makes this arguable, however. See, contra, K. Jettmar, *Zur Wanderungsgeschichte der Iranier*, Vienna 1956.

[8] See W. B. Henning apud M. Boyce, *BSOAS* XXXIII, 1969, 16 n. 31. On the coming of the Iron Age among the Indians and Iranians, from c. 1000 B.C., see N. R. Banerjee, *The Iron Age in India*, Delhi 1965; R. Ghirshman, *Iran (Pelican Archaeology Series)* London 1954, 86-8.

[9] See H. Lüders, *Eine arische Anschauung über den Vertragsbruch, SPAW, Phil.-hist. kl.*, 1917.

pantheon.[10] It may also be mirrored in one of the oldest of the Avestan hymns, the *Mihr Yašt*, where the expression *vīspanąm dahyunąm daiŋhupaiti-* "king of many countries" occurs, as well as *daiŋhusasti* "command of countries, empire", and *dahyunąm fratəmatāt* "council of the first men of countries", possibly that is, of tribal chiefs or vassal kings.[11] That those with power themselves should have accepted the restraints of pact and bond seems in accord with the leading philosophical concept of the Indo-Iranians, that of *ṛta* (Avestan *aša*),[12] by which was understood a principle of order and rightness that governed the natural world (causing the sun to rise and set and the seasons to change), and also directed human society, so that to be happy in life and death men must submit to its workings, and regulate their own lives with seemliness. The social pattern thus divined for the Indo-Iranians is in harmony with what is known of later nomads of the steppes, such as the Mongols, among whom likewise there existed strong traditions of mutual loyalty and obligation, as well as power in the hands of great chiefs. In the uncertain conditions of a wandering life good leadership is necessary for the well-being of family, tribe and people; and so one has the development of "nomad feudalism", with a hierarchy mounting up to a position of very considerable power for its head. As has been pointed out,[13] the ultimate conquests by Indians and Iranians of the lands where they now live would hardly have been possible without such leaders, as in the case of the great nomad invasions of historic times.

Another aspect of Indo-Iranian society in its pastoral period was that it was divided broadly into three groups.[14] In Zoroaster's hymns these were called by the following terms: *nar*, literally "man", that is, the fighting man or warrior; *zaotar* "priest", either "he who makes the offerings" or

[10] See in more detail in the following chapter. For the persistence in the Rigveda and later Indian literature of the idea that earthly kings, and the king of the gods, were both themselves bound by obligations see H.-P. Schmidt, *Vedisch vratá und awestisch urvāta*, Hamburg 1958, 42-4; W. Rau, *Staat und Gesellschaft im alten Indien*, Wiesbaden 1957, 93 f.; P. Thieme, *IIJ* III, 1959, 148-9.

[11] See *Yt.* 10. 145, 87, 18. I. Gershevitch (*The Avestan hymn to Mithra*, Cambridge 1959, 296-9) who thus interprets these terms, seeks, perhaps rightly, to link them rather with conditions prevailing in Central Asia in the 6th century B.C., at the time of the rise of the Achaemenians. The fluidity of the oral tradition by which almost all Avestan texts have been transmitted makes it impossible to date their subject-matter at all closely.

[12] See further in the following chapter.

[13] Lüders, op. cit., p. 374.

[14] See E. Benveniste, "Les classes sociales dans la tradition avestique", *JA* 1932, 117-34; "Traditions indo-iraniennes sur les classes sociales", *JA* 1938, 529-49. On G. Dumézil's theory that these three groups were reflected in a threefold division also of the Indo-European (and hence Indo-Iranian) gods see Vol. IV, Appendix. On the general social and cultural picture given by the Avesta (treated in the main as if it represented "Avestan" society at one place and time) see B. Geiger, *Ostirānische Kultur im Alterthum*, Erlangen 1882; transl. by D. P. Sanjana, *Civilization of the Eastern Iranians in ancient times*, London 1885.

"he who invokes";[15] and *vāstar* "pasturer", the herdsman who tended the cattle in their grazing grounds *(vāstra-)*. In the later Avesta other terms occur also. Thus there is a general term for a priest, *āthravan, athaurvan* (Skt. *átharvan*), an Indo-Iranian word of doubtful etymology;[16] and the herdsman is commonly called *vāstryō.fšuyant* "(cattle)-fattening pasturer", and is also termed *khvāšar* "good-pasturer".[17] The warrior is usually known as *rathaēštar* "chariot rider", a term evolved evidently after the Iranians had adopted the war-chariot instead of fighting on foot. This development is held to have taken place during the second millennium B.C.;[18] and so popular did the chariot become that in time most of the gods of the Iranians and Indians came to be conceived as driving in one. Zoroaster himself seems to have made use of a wheeled vehicle in his journeyings;[19] but the vocabulary of his poetry still reflects an older state of affairs, when probably only the weak and old travelled in heavy ox-drawn carts, and men would have made their way, and fought, on foot. The riding of horses seems to have come even later, probably not until well into the first millennium B.C.,[20] and is reflected in yet another Younger Avestan word for warrior: *bāšar* "horseman".[21] The dog must earlier have been therefore an invaluable ally of the nomad herdsman, in rounding up and protecting the grazing herds; and it was evidently in those far-off days that cow and dog together assumed their great importance in the social and also religious life of the Indo-Iranians, an importance which in Zoroastrianism they never lost.

The division of society into three classes or estates is found with other pastoral peoples of old, such as the ancient Irish, and is indeed held by some to have been a feature of Indo-European society. The theory was long sustained in Iran and India; but plainly even in their nomadic days

[15] Ir. *zaotar*, Ved. *hotṛ* probably both derive from an Indo-Iranian **źhautar* in which two meanings appear to have coalesced, from agent nouns of two different verbs meaning to "pour" and "call"; see Bartholomae, *Altiranisches Wörterbuch*, 1653; K. F. Geldner in *Indo-Iranian Studies presented to D. P. Sanjana*, 2nd series, 1925, 277 ff.; Gershevitch, *AHM*, 272.

[16] The link formerly proposed with Av. *ātar* "fire" is now generally rejected on philological grounds. See S. Wikander, *Feuerpriester in Kleinasien und Iran*, Lund 1946, 12-14.

[17] See Benveniste, *JA* 1932, 123-4 *(khvāšar < *hu.vāstar-)*.

[18] See Stuart Piggott, *Prehistoric India to 1000 B.C.*, 2nd ed., London 1962, 268-9, 275-83; A. Kammenhuber, *Hippologia hethica*, Wiesbaden 1961, 10 f.; R. A. Crossland, *Cambridge Ancient History*, 3rd ed., I 2, 1971, 873-4; D. M. Lang, *Armenia*, London 1970, 82-3.

[19] See *Yasna* 51.12 (if the assumption is right, see Bartholomae, *Air. Wb.* 1417, that *vāzā* is dual for "two draught-animals").

[20] The Scythians or Sakas seem to have been the first fully-mounted nomads of the steppes.

[21] See Benveniste, loc. cit.; Bartholomae, *Grundriss der iranischen Philologie*, I 171, § 295 *(bāšar- < bartar-)*.

the Indo-Iranians did not in fact have so simple a social structure that it could be limited to only three groups, rigidly defined by occupation. The calling of the smith, for example, is an old one, and the finely-wrought products of the later Bronze Age are evidently the work of skilled craftsmen. Another group of craftsmen with an Indo-European heritage were the minstrels, and remnants of an Indo-Iranian tradition of heroic poetry survive in the literatures of both Iran and India.[22] There must have been lyric and elegiac poetry also, and occasional verses, the work of trained professional bards; and religious and learned poetry was cultivated by priests. Theirs was the learned class, but their learning was acquired and transmitted orally, for the Indo-Iranians had no knowledge of writing, nor did they find this art among the peoples whom they first conquered, and it remained unknown to them down to historic times; and even after they had acquired it, they did not choose to adapt it to religious purposes until many more centuries had passed.

There is no reason to suppose that in those early days each man was strictly bound to the calling of his fathers. The Iranians have never had a rigid caste system such as that which developed in post-Vedic India, and there was always an element, however slight, of mobility in their society. Yet naturally the usual course would have been for a boy to follow his father's occupation, which he would have been set to learn at a very early age. Herodotus records[23] that among the Persians of the 5th century B.C. it was usual for boys of the noble or "warrior" class to begin their training at the age of five, by learning to ride and shoot and tell the truth; and in both India and Iran the tradition survived into the 20th century that priests' sons were apprenticed to their exacting calling at about the age of seven.[24] Zoroaster himself, alone among the founders of great religions, was a priest by profession, and he must have been trained therefore from infancy in the practices and doctrines of the ancient faith which he was inspired to reform.

[22] To use the word "balladenhaft" in connection with these traces (see H. Lommel, *Die Yäšt's des Awesta*, Göttingen and Leipzig 1927, 1) suggests a derivation from folk poetry; and a "folk tradition" is assumed by A. Christensen in *Les gestes des rois dans les traditions de l'Iran antique*, Paris 1936, where he distinguishes between priestly and popular elements; but the evidence from other comparable cultures suggests rather an origin for these heroic stories in professional minstrelsy. See in general H. M. and N. K. Chadwick, *The Growth of Literature*, Cambridge, 3 vols., 1932-1940; C. M. Bowra, *Heroic Poetry*, London 1952; and in particular on the Iranian material, P. Thieme, *ZDMG* 107 (N.F. 32), 1957, 226 ff.; M. Boyce, in this *Handbuch*, I (ed. B. Spuler) IV.2.1, 55-7, 58 n. 2.

[23] I.136.

[24] On the Indian tradition see A. Hillebrandt, *Ritualliteratur, Vedische Opfer und Zauber*, Strassburg 1897, 50 ff. On living Brahman practice see J. F. Staal, *Nambudiri Veda Recitation*, 's-Gravenhage 1961, 40; and on recent and living Zoroastrian practice Boyce, *BSOAS* XXXIII, 1970, 24 with n. 6.

Among priests of the Indo-Iranian period, as in later times, there were evidently different vocations; but it is likely that there was a basic training in which they all shared. The fact that there are common elements in the rituals of Zoroastrians and Brahmans shows that there is an old tradition behind these, transmitted from generation to generation. In addition to mastering such rituals, a priest would have had to know sacred words to accompany them, as well as hymns or songs of praise to please the gods when they came, duly summoned, to the offerings. For hundreds of years, among Brahmans and Zoroastrians, the words of all prayers and hymns have been fixed, to be memorised and repeated exactly; but formerly there was evidently both learning by heart, whereby the traditions of the sacred literature were preserved, and freedom to compose afresh, although within its established conventions. Three main categories of formal religious utterance are known. Firstly there was the *mantra*, Av. *mąthra*. This word comes, it seems, from the base *man* "think", and has been defined as formulated meditation, the utterance which was the "instrument of thought".[25] The *mantra* or *mąthra* accompanied rituals; and of old an inspired priest would compose such utterances. In the Vedic idiom he was *mantrakṛt*, a "*mantra*-maker", one who enunciated the *mantra* "well-fashioned from the heart" *(hṛdā́ á sútaṣṭam)*,[26] which others would remember and repeat after him. (The Vedic seer received his vision with or in his heart, *hṛdā́* or *hṛdí*, and a phrase in the *Gāthās*, *zərədāčā manaŋhāčā* "by heart and thought", shows that the same was true for the ancient Iranians, the heart being regarded as the seat of *manas* "thought".[27]) Vedic has also an adjective *mantrin* "knowing the *mantras*", and Zoroaster repeatedly uses an Iranian equivalent, *mąthran*, of himself.[28] In general, it seems, priestly utterances were regarded as inspired in the strictest sense, being revealed or revealing themselves, for such inspiration was held to come either from a deity or from a faculty within the priest himself.

A second category of composition, the song of praise, has been compared with the panegyric uttered by a minstrel to please a worldly master, for in the same way the hymn was intended to please the god and induce him to show favour to his worshippers. In order to be effective praises of the divinity and descriptions of his former deeds and bounties needed, however, to be true and truly expressed;[29] and the priest had therefore to be properly instructed both in religious knowledge and in the art of composition. Such hymns of praise and worship are represented in Iran by the Avestan *yašts*, and in India by the hymns of the *udgātṛ*, the "song" priest. Both have similar metres, with a characteristic eight-syllable line, and both are relatively simple and direct in content and expression.

Thirdly there is the poetry represented in Iran solely by the *Gāthās* composed by the *zaotar*, Zoroaster, and in India by the "wisdom" poetry of the *hotar*, with characteristic eleven-syllable verses.[30] This *zaotar/hotar* poetry, with its predominantly instructive content, is extremely elaborate, the product evidently of a long and learned tradition; and it was intended plainly for the ears of those familiar with that tradition, who would be capable of understanding its highly artificial constructions and elucidating its meanings, despite a "marked inclination to enigmatical obscurity".[31] Those priests who composed this kind of verse must have devoted years of concentrated study to mastering its techniques and modes of expression; and it seems probable, to judge from the intellectual content of this type of literature, that the *zaotar/hotar* schools of poetry were maintained by the thinkers among the priests, those who sought to inquire after truth and to elucidate the nature of things. Probably, moreover, this ancient category of poetry, which had, it seems, Indo-European roots,[32] was cultivated particularly in connection with mantic activity, with prophecy and divination.

With regard to the organisation of the priesthood, it has been said of ancient India that "there can be no question that beside the royal families a spiritual aristocracy, powerful and wealthy, and provided with its own sacred literature, existed long before we have any evidence for a Brahman caste . . . this aristocracy had apparently no central organisation, apart from the families themselves. Neither were its foundations fixed locally; for we hear nothing of permanent sanctuaries in this period. The families or their heads were doubtless as a rule attached to the service of kings; for

[25] See Thieme, *ZDMG* 107, 69.

[26] *RV* 2.35.2, cf. 1.67.4, both cited by Thieme, loc. cit.

[27] *Y*.31.12, on which see F. B. J. Kuiper, *IIJ* VIII, 1964, 125. On *manas*, and its dwelling in the heart see further H. Oldenberg, *Die Religion des Veda*, 2nd ed., Berlin 1917 (repr. 1970), 525-30.

[28] For references see Bartholomae, *Air. Wb.* 1179.

[29] This is of course true also of the minstrel's panegyric, and of heroic poetry in general, see Bowra, *Heroic Poetry*, 40-1.

[30] On the poetry of *hotṛ* and *udgatṛ* see Hillebrandt, *Ritualliteratur*, 99-101; Lommel, "War Zarathustra ein Bauer?" *KZ* LVIII, 1931; repr. in *Zarathustra*, ed. B. Schlerath, Darmstadt 1970, 44-5; Thieme, art. cit., 240-1. On the traditional elements in Avestan composition see Benveniste, "Phraséologie poétique de l'Indo-iranien", *Mélanges d'Indianisme à la mémoire de L. Renou*, Paris 1968, 73-9; B. Schlerath, *Avesta-Wörterbuch, Vorarbeiten* II, Wiesbaden 1968, Konkordanz C, 148-64; R. Schmitt, *Studien zur indogermanischen Dichtersprache*, Diss. Saarbrücken 1965.

[31] Thieme in *Zarathustra*, ed. Schlerath, 398.

[32] See E. Schwyzer, *APAW* 1939, 6, 10 f., 22, 25; H. H. Schaeder, "Ein indogermanischer Liedtypus in den Gathas", *ZDMG* XCIV, 1940, 399-408.

a priest could obtain the richest rewards by becoming a *purohita* or "chaplain" to a king".[33] This system, whereby most members of the priesthood were attached to individual families, is common still to the Zoroastrians and Brahmans, and has its origins no doubt in the Indo-Iranian era. It was indeed a system admirably suited in the remote past to nomadic peoples who had, it appears, no established cult-centres to be served by priests, but who performed their sacred rituals wherever they found themselves. Doubtless in prehistoric as in later times many domestic observances (such as tending the hearth-fire and making offerings to the ancestral spirits) were performed by the laity in their own homes; but for major rituals priests with their greater knowledge must always have been needed. The common Indo-Iranian tradition shows that, in accordance with the individualism of the steppe-dweller, these rituals were invariably performed at the command of a single person, from whom the priest received his recompense. (No system of regular stipends has evolved even yet among Brahmans or Zoroastrians.) This person was called in Sanskrit the *yajamāna*, the one who ordained the sacrifice[34]—a term subsequently adopted as appropriate by the Parsis in its Gujarati form of *yajmān* or *jajmān*; in later Zoroastrian idiom he is the one who gives the "command" *(framāyišn)* for the ceremony.[35] Even if the whole community were concerned, as in times of war or famine, still the rituals were performed on the authority of an individual, in such cases the prince or local leader.

In the distant nomadic days it must be supposed that each Iranian group had usually its own priestly families and individual priests; but among the Medes it is reported that one of their six tribes, called by the Greeks the "Magoi",[36] supplied priests for all the rest.[37] There is no knowing how old was this custom, first reported from the 5th century B.C.; but in any case, although the "Magi" later played so large a part in Zoroastrianism, their name appears to be absent from the Avesta itself, for it has been shown that in all probability YAv. *moghu.tbiš* means, not "hostile to the Magus" (as used to be thought), but rather "hostile to a member of the tribe".[38] It may be, however, that Avestan *moghu* and

[33] Chadwick, *Growth* II, 610.
[34] See P. Oltremare, *Le rôle du yajamāna dans le sacrifice brahmanique*, Louvain 1903.
[35] See J. J. Modi, *The religious ceremonies and customs of the Parsis*, 2nd ed., Bombay 1937, 361, 366.
[36] Herodotus I. 101.
[37] Ibid., I. 132.
[38] See E. Benveniste, *Les mages dans l'Ancien Iran, Publications de la Société des Études Iraniennes* 15, Paris 1938; W. Eilers, *Abh. d. Ak. d. Wissenschaften u. d. Literatur in Mainz*, 1953 Nr. 2, 77 n. 2; I. Gershevitch, *JNES* XXIII, 1964, 36. Against the interpretation by H. W. Bailey (*Henning Mem. Vol.*, London 1970, 34) of *magōm* in *Y*.53.7 as a corruption of the variant *magāuš* "of the magus", see W. Hinz, *IF* LXXVII, 1972, 291.

Medean *magu* were the same word in origin, a common Iranian term for "member of the tribe" having developed among the Medes the special sense of "member of *the* (priestly) tribe", hence a priest.[39] It is thus in the west of Iran that the principle of a hereditary priesthood, exclusive in character, is first encountered. Among the Avestan people, as in Vedic India,[40] it seems that the priestly class had less rigid barriers; for Zoroaster himself, although a *zaotar*, married into a "warrior" family, and gave one of his daughters in marriage in the same way. (Similarly in living Zoroastrianism priests have intermarried with the laity; but the right to become a priest descends strictly from father to son. It cannot be transmitted through a priest's daughter to his grandchildren.)

Matters are complicated with regard to the ancient priesthood by the question of the position and character of the *kavi*. In Vedic India the *kavi* was a mantic poet, a wise man, a seer. The word was used of men and gods, of Soma and the *soma*-priest; for the drinking of *soma* stimulated the shaping of *kā́vya*. "A *kā́vya* is not merely an 'inspired utterance', but often a 'magically potent spell'."[41] In Iran the term *kavi* and its Middle Iranian derivatives of *kav, kay*, appear in various usages. In the *Gāthās* Zoroaster speaks harshly of the *kavis* who are hostile to his teachings; but his patron Vīštāspa, the ruler who finally accepted his doctrines, bore the title of *kavi*, and so, according to tradition, did his ancestors before him. In the Manichaean scriptures composed in Middle Iranian (which in their vocabulary owe much to Zoroastrianism) *kav* is used of gods and men, in the latter case in the sense of "giant". In Zoroastrian tradition, except in one particular formula of execration, *kay* means "king", evidently because Kavi Vīštāspa and his forbears, the "kavis" par excellence, were princely rulers.[42] Presumably the gift of prophecy, of mantic poetry, was hereditary in their family; but whether the Iranian *kavi* was ever also a priest, or whether as in Israel mantic prophecy was freely cultivated by men outside the priesthood, there seems no means of knowing. It is perhaps significant, however, that Zoroaster, who was both priest and prophet, appears to have regarded the *kavis* as being of a different order, and described himself as *mąthran*, one who revealed *mąthras* rather than *kā́vyas*. What-

[39] Benveniste, op. cit., 18-19; and on the possible etymology of the word ibid., 19-20. In the 5th century B.C. not all "Magoi" were priests.
[40] On royal "priests" and Brahman "warriors" see Lommel in *Zarathustra*, ed. Schlerath, 46; Chadwick, *Growth* II, 612, 615.
[41] J. Brough, *BSOAS* XXXIV, 1971, 339.
[42] Christensen, *Les Kayanides*, Copenhagen 1932, followed the then accepted interpretation of Gathic *kavi* simply as "prince, ruler", as did Lommel, *Yašt's*, 171-2. Against this see K. Barr, *Avesta*, Copenhagen 1954, 206; Gershevitch, *AHM* 185-6. On the Indian *ṛṣi* and *kavi* see J. Gonda, *The vision of the Vedic poets*, The Hague 1963.

ever the precise definition of their name, it seems probable that the *kavis* who set themselves against Zoroaster did so as "wise men" who had their own apprehensions of the divine, and were not ready to accept his new and highly personal revelation.

With the hostile *kavi* Zoroaster linked the *karapan* and *usij*. The latter, mentioned only once (*Y*.44.20), can be identified with the Vedic *uśij*. In the Vedas too he is rarely referred to, but like the *kavi* he appears to have been a "wise man", and the two terms seem to be used sometimes interchangeably.[43] The *karapan* has no Vedic equivalent; but he is spoken of several times in the *Gāthās*, and in the later or "Younger" Avesta he appears together with the *kavi* in a stereotyped formula of execration, which enumerates the foes of Zoroastrianism. He represents there, it is thought, the priest of the *daēvic* cult. The word has been connected with Sanskrit *kalpa* "ritual", with the deduction that *karapan* meant a ritual priest, one engaged in ceremonies;[44] but latterly it has been suggested[45] that the word should rather be associated with a Khwarezmian verb *karb-* "moan, mumble" (Skt. *kṛp-*), in which case one might suppose it to have been used pejoratively by Zoroaster for the ordinary conservatively-minded priest, repeating or "mumbling" liturgies and prayers without much thought for their meaning. By either interpretation the *karapans* are taken to be working priests, whereas the *kavis* and *usijs* had, it appears, mantic powers of wisdom and prophecy. Naturally opponents of Zoroaster's new teachings were to be expected among all orders of religiously-minded men.

Nothing is known of the organisation of priestly learning; but evidently there were schools of various kinds, as well as instruction handed down within families. In Younger Avestan the word *aēthrapati* "master of *aēthra*" appears, which, although its etymology and exact meaning are uncertain,[46] seems to describe an instructor of priests, a teacher, his pupil or disciple being called *aēthrya*. Since these two terms occur in what appears to be an ancient part of the hymn to Mithra, they probably belonged to the pagan Iranian world. In its later forms of *ērbad*, *hērbad*, *ērvad* the word *aēthrapati* has a continuous history in Zoroastrianism. With the *aēthrapati* is named once the *hamidhpati* (*Yt*.13.105), who also apparently was an instructor.[47]

[43] See M. Haug, *Essays on the sacred language, writings and religion of the Parsis*, 3rd ed., London 1884, 289; Bartholomae, *Air. Wb.* 406.

[44] See Haug, op. cit., 289-90; Bartholomae, *Air. Wb.* 455.

[45] See Henning, *Zoroaster*, 45.

[46] Bailey, *BSOAS* XX, 1957, 42-3, postulates a base *ay-* "pronounce solemnly, instruct", hence *aēthra* "instruction", *aēthrya* "one being instructed".

[47] *Yt*.13.105. Bailey, art. cit., 43, seeks to derive this word too from *ay-* "instruct", with preverb *ham*.

The various Old Iranian words for priest and prophet suggest a complex pattern of religious life and experience in pagan Iran; but the need to perform the basic rituals and acts of worship must have brought seer and working priest together in religious community, together with members of the other two classes. The Indo-Iranian custom was evidently that at maturity each man underwent a ceremony at which he was invested with a sacred cord which he always wore thereafter (maturity being reckoned at 15 years of age). As an initiate he was then able to take his part in corporate acts of worship, and had also the duty to fulfil the regular religious obligations which devolved on all men, priest or lay.

As well as being divided theoretically into three classes, Iranian society had a further fourfold grouping by kinship and association. There was the household or agnatic family group (which is referred to in the *Gāthās* as *khvaētu* "family", in the Younger Avesta as *nmāna* "house"); the settlement or village (GAv. *vərəzāna*, YAv. *vīs*); the tribal area or tribe (GAv. *šōithra* "region, territorial unit", YAv. *zantu* "tribe"); and finally the country or association in the widest sense (*dahyu*).[48] In the nomadic period this last term presumably meant the grazing lands belonging by customary right to a group of tribes. In settled times it indicated the area occupied by people who acknowledged the same ruler. (Probably such an area, although sometimes extensive, might also be relatively small, a single river-valley or mountain-locked plain). At the head of each of these four social groups was its "lord", its *ratu* or *-pati*. In the Younger Avesta the terms are *nmānōpaiti*, *vīspaiti*, *zantupaiti*, and *daiŋhupaiti* (older **dahyupaiti*). There is nothing to suggest a parallel priestly hierarchy, except in so far as the priest of the *daiŋhupati* (the *purohita* of Vedic idiom[49]) would naturally be a man of greater wealth and influence than those who served the many *nmānopaitis* under his rule.

The fact that it is possible to draw so many parallels between the institutions, customs and ways of thought of the Vedic Indians and Avestan Iranians shows how powerful a formative influence the pastoral life had been which their ancestors lived together upon the Asian steppes. The most frequent symbol which they have in common in their religious literature is that of the cow, the animal which for countless generations

[48] For an analysis of these terms and their precise meanings see Benveniste, *Les mages*, 6-13; P. Thieme, *Mitra and Aryaman, Trans. of the Connecticut Ac. of Arts and Sciences*, 41, 1957, 79-80. For Old Persian parallels see R. N. Frye, *The heritage of Persia*, London 1962, 52.

[49] On the position and power of the Indian *purohita* see Hillebrandt, *Ritualliteratur*, 12-13; Oldenberg, *Religion*, 375-83; J. Gonda, *Die Religionen Indiens* I (*Die Religionen der Menschheit*, ed. C. M. Schröder, Bd. 11), Stuttgart 1960, 12.

had been the main source of their livelihood and comfort; and this symbol has the deepest significance for both peoples. In his *Gāthās* Zoroaster himself used it with a range and complexity of meaning which for long baffled modern interpreters;[50] and it is a striking fact that whereas cattle imagery recurs again and again in his verses, there is not a single simile there drawn from tilling the soil—no mention of plough or corn, seedtime or harvest, though such things are much spoken of in the Younger Avesta, gradually, indeed, replacing cattle in the religious symbolism.[51] The tradition in which the prophet composed his own hymns appears to be still wholly that of a pastoral people; and this brings us back once again to the question of when he lived, which is linked with the problem of when the Iranians occupied Central Asia.

The earliest indication of the presence of Aryans on the Iranian plateau comes, surprisingly, from the south-west of the land; for in Babylonia about 1760 B.C. there is named among the gods of the conquering Kassites (a mountain people from Babylon's eastern border) a sun-god Suriiaš, who is generally interpreted as representing the Indo-Iranian *Surya-s.[52] Clay tablets from Egypt show that about 1400 B.C. there were various local dynasties with Aryan names in Syria and Palestine;[53] and at Boghazköi in Asia Minor tablets have been discovered relating to the kingdom of Mitanni, in which there occur, together with a few Aryan loan-words and proper names, the names of four Aryan gods among those invoked over a treaty. These are recognizable as the Vedic Mitra and Varuṇa, Indra and Nāsatya.[54] A strong case has been made on linguistic grounds for regarding these elements in the Mitanni records as proto-

[50] See further below, Ch. 8.

[51] See, e.g., *Vd.* III.30: "What is the core of the Mazdā-worshipping religion?" Then answered Ahura Mazdā: "When corn is abundantly sown, O Spitama Zarathuštra. He who sows corn, sows righteousness *(aša-)*".

[52] For references see A. Christensen, *Die Iranier* (*Handbuch d. Klass. Altertums-Wissenschaft* III, Abt. I.3:3.1), Munich 1933, 209 n. 3. Against the supposition that the name Assara Mazaš, occurring on tablets of the Assyrian Assurbanipal, represents *Asura Mazdā see A. Ungnad, "Ahura-Mazdāh und Mithra in assyrischen Texten", *OLZ* XLVI, 1943, 193-201. Recently, however, M. Mayrhofer has argued anew in favour of the identification, see his "Neuere Forschungen zum Altpersischen", *Donum Indogermanicum, Festgabe f. A. Scherer*, Heidelberg 1971, 51-2. Attempts have been made to identify the name of the Iranian god Zurvān in the cuneiform tablets of Nuzi, of the 14th century B.C.; but E. A. Speiser, *Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research* XVI, 1936, 99, nos 47 and 48 "notes that this name should be read *Zarwa(n)*, a Hurrian goddess, probably a deified place name, and with no hint of time speculation or any connection with Zurvan" (Frye, *Heritage*, 267 n. 66).

[53] See Christensen, *Die Iranier*, 209 n. 4.

[54] For the extensive literature on the subject see M. Mayrhofer, *Die Indo-Arier im alten Vorderasien, mit einer analytischen Bibliographie*, Wiesbaden 1966; and, notably, P. Thieme, "The Aryan gods of the Mitanni treaties", *JAOS* LXXX, 1960, 301-17 (q.v., p. 315, on the question of a single divinity, Nāsatya, against the twin Nāsatyas of the Vedas).

Indian, rather than Indo-Iranian;[55] and this is a remarkable fact, with Indians thus appearing first in history to the west of Iran. It seems, however, that no mass movement was involved in bringing these gods into Anatolia and Mesopotamia. Presumably it was a matter of small warbands penetrating into these ancient kingdoms, either as mercenaries or bold adventurers; and they came perhaps down through the mountain passes to the west of the Caspian. The main migrations must have been of whole peoples, led by their fighting men but bringing with them their chattels in cumbrous ox-drawn carts, and above all their herds, their source of livelihood and wealth; and these, it is held, must have entered Iran through Central Asia, where the flat open country provides grazing for cattle, and has indeed made a natural corridor for nomad invaders down the ages.[56] The main body of the Indian peoples presumably moved first through these territories, branching off south-easterly by the passes leading from Herat down through Sabzavar to Qandahar, whereas the Iranians, following, pressed on south-westerly through Margiana and Parthia, and so on to the Iranian plateau.[57] Some scholars maintain, however, that a number of Indians (or "proto-Indoaryans") had earlier turned on to the Iranian plateau, from perhaps about 1500 B.C., and that it was such migrants who left their traces among the Kassites and Mitanni, before being submerged by the following waves of Iranians.[58]

Central Asia was neither an empty nor a primitive region when the migrations took place. In Parthia archaeologists have identified farming communities which made use of irrigation as early as the 5th millennium B.C., which sets them among the oldest known agriculturalists in the world.[59] By the 2nd millennium the southern part of Central Asia had advanced to the threshold of urban life, and its main centres of population could almost be classified as towns rather than large villages, since they had quarters for specialised crafts and groups of richer houses and

[55] To Mayrhofer's bibliography add now T. Burrow, "The Proto-Indoaryans", *JRAS* 1973, 123-40.

[56] On this see, e.g., Christensen, *Die Iranier*, 212; L. H. Gray, *JCOI* 15, 1929, 10-11; Frye, *Heritage*, 22; Ghirshman, *Iran*, London 1954, 75 ff. There are, nevertheless, archaeologists who argue that the main Iranian invasion was by the Caucasus, see most recently P. Bosch-Gimpera, "The migration route of the Indo-Aryans", *J. of Indo-European Studies* I, 1973, 513-17.

[57] For some archaeological evidence for the course of Iranian movement on the plateau, derived from the study of early Iron Age pottery, see T. Cuyler Young, "The Iranian migration into the Zagros", *Iran* V, 1967, 11-34.

[58] For this theory see most recently T. Burrow, art. cit.

[59] See V. M. Masson, "The first farmers in Turkmenia", *Antiquity* XXXV, 1961, 203-13; Frumkin, *Archaeology in Soviet Central Asia*, 130; Belenitsky, *Ancient Civilization of Central Asia*, 26-8; Masson-Sarianidi, *Central Asia*, 42-3.

poorer ones.[60] There was trade from here southward and westward with the Iranian plateau and Mesopotamia, whereas the less-advanced northern region seems rather to have bartered goods with the Inner Asian steppes.[61] Probably its peoples had a long acquaintance, therefore, peaceful or semi-peaceful, with the Indian and Iranian nomads before they began to pour down into the land.[62] Excavations suggest that they moved into the northern region about 1500 B.C., for it seems then to have passed into the possession of "poor but numerous and apparently warlike tribes of nomadic cattle-breeders";[63] and soon after there came about a sudden collapse of the proto-urban civilisation in the south—the large centres of population declined and were abandoned, and the life which went on in smaller oasis-villages seems to have returned to a simpler level.[64] Whether the Indo-Iranian invaders were as fierce as the Turks and Mongols after them, and slew as many of the inhabitants of the land, can never be known; but the Avestan *yašts* contain a number of warlike allusions to non-Iranians and prayers to the divine beings for their overthrow; and it is a fact that the language and culture of the older Avesta is almost purely Iranian[65], so that in the north-east the conquered peoples, if not slain, appear to have become submerged as wave after wave of migrants passed across their land.

The first absolute dating for settlements of Iranians in Iran itself comes from Assyrian cuneiform tablets. The Assyrians conducted war-raids deep into Media (that is, the north-west of Iran, stretching as far east as the salt desert, the Dašt-i Kavīr); and the place-names which they record suggest that in the 8th century B.C. the Iranians were not yet fully dominant in Western Media, whereas in Eastern Media, nearer to the main highway of migration, most place-names seem to have become Iranian at least by 700 B.C.[66] Among the booty which the Assyrians recorded bringing back from their expeditions on to the Iranian plateau were long-horned cattle, as well as great numbers of horses[67]—partly no doubt seized from the herds of the invaders.

[60] See Frumkin, op. cit., 89 and generally; Belenitsky, op. cit., 45; Masson-Sarianidi, op. cit., 98, 112-24.

[61] See Belenitsky, op. cit., 31, 49-50.

[62] See Masson-Sarianidi, 152-3.

[63] Ibid., 137.

[64] See ibid.

[65] Burrow, *JRAS* 1973, 123-40, has argued that a small number of words, including the theologically highly important *daēva*, are properly Indian, or rather "proto-Indoaryan"; that they belonged, that is, to those Indians who are held to have entered Iran first, being taken over from them in due course by the conquering Iranians. This thesis may well be tenable for some daevic expressions (on which see further below, Ch. 10), but can hardly be upheld for the word *daēva* itself. On this see further in the following chapter.

[66] See König, *Älteste Geschichte der Meder und Perser*, 53 f.; I. M. Diakonov, *Istoriya Midii*, Moscow 1956. Since then Professor Diakonov has slightly modified his former datings with regard to the Medean presence on the Iranian plateau, see his chapter on the Medes in *Cambridge History of Iran*, Vol. II, ed. I. Gershevitch (in preparation).

Where the place was of the Avestan people in this great chain of movement at about 1000 B.C. remains entirely obscure. His hymns suggest that Zoroaster belonged to a settled community, and perhaps his tribe had already occupied a part of Khwarezmia before he was born. If so, it may have been tradition (and probably the conventions of religious poetry were highly conservative) which kept his imagery still strictly pastoral. Perhaps, on the contrary, they were established during his lifetime further to the north. However it may have been, the society so tantalisingly reflected in brief allusions in his verses seems moulded in its ways of thought and worship far more by the millennia of experience which lay behind it on the steppes than by any new culture that it had encountered in moving south; and it is backward therefore to those distant days that one must look in order to find the origins of Zoroaster's own beliefs and intuitions.

The problem is to find the means to do so. Archaeology can give only limited help, and apart from it there are two main sources of information. One is the ancient Indian literature, in particular the Rigveda, together with the Brāhmaṇas or ritual texts. The other is the "Younger" Avesta, which, despite its name, preserves many archaic elements. Its testimony can be amplified by later Pahlavi renderings of lost Avestan texts, and by the surviving Zoroastrian books of ritual—which, like the Brāhmaṇas, can still be illuminated by living usage. By comparing the traditions one can hope to sift out a common element which should represent the heritage which the two peoples kept from their Indo-Iranian past. There are factors, however, which make comparisons of the material difficult. In the realm of beliefs there was among the Indians a tendency to elaborate, to speculate on the nature and activities of the gods, and to let fecund imagination create new myths, symbols and analogies. There seems to have been a more realistic, sober grain to the Old Iranian character, and Zoroaster's revelation helped also to control fantasy; but it led evidently to certain elements in the pagan religion being rejected and therefore lost. Hence it comes about that the material for reconstructing Indo-Iranian beliefs is "in general fragmentary and meagre in the Avesta, in the Vedas . . . of a confused abundance."[68] For a long while it was held that abundance meant a greater tenacity, and that the testimony of the

[67] See König, op. cit., 13.

[68] E. Benveniste and L. Renou, *Vṛtra et Vṛθragna, étude de mythologie indo-iranienne*, Paris 1934, 1.

Vedas was to be regarded as superior; but further investigations have shown that in some respects the sparser Avestan material is more reliable. "The Vedic evidence is valuable for its richness, the Avestan evidence for its fidelity."[69] Naturally this generalisation cannot be valid in every instance, and wherever the same gods were still worshipped by the Indians and Iranians both literatures must be scrutinised in an attempt to distinguish the ancient stratum of belief, and to discern what may have been added, what lost. On the Iranian side the evidence can be supplemented a little from the inscriptions of the Achaemenian kings, and notices about Iranian religious observances by Greek historians; for although there were evidently some local variations in beliefs and customs, the diverse pagan Iranian peoples seem to have enjoyed in the main a religious unity, and to have worshipped the same gods with similar rites.

In studying the rituals (in which there appear to have been fewer changes than in beliefs) one has to allow again for elaborations by the Brahmans, with the basic ceremonies becoming ever more prolonged, and the part of the priest ever more dominant; whereas in Irán the strong doctrinal framework of Zoroastrianism, and its prevailing ethical purpose, acted as barriers to such developments. Yet despite these divergences the similarities in rites of worship and funerary customs are in many ways striking, and give further proof that both peoples were intensely conservative in their beliefs and ways. Much has been written about the various fresh influences which affected the Indians in their new home, both from the conquered peoples, and from climate and terrain, with the heat, abundant vegetation and monsoon rains. Those scholars are probably right who see these factors as exerting their influence only very gradually;[70] but in general it is agreed that the Iranians, moving from the Inner Asian steppes to Central Asia and the plateau of Iran itself, with mighty mountain ranges, fertile plains and barren deserts, and with extremes of dry cold and heat, remained in conditions which were closer to those of the shared Indo-Iranian past, and which helped them to sustain tradition. These sharp contrasts tended, moreover, to foster a dualistic way of thought, a tendency to see the opposition in things, which was to find

[69] Ibid., 182.

[70] On the question of whether the influence of the indigenous peoples can already be discerned in the Rigveda see, e.g., A. Berriedale Keith, *The religion and philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads, Harvard Oriental Series* 1925, I 51-5; Oldenberg, *Religion*, 32-3. On the problem of whether or not there was contact between the Vedic peoples and the culture of Mohenjo-daro see J. Marshall, *Mohenjo-daro and the Indus Civilization*, London 1931, 110 ff.; J. Bloch, *L'Indo-aryan du veda aux temps modernes*, Paris 1934, 322. J. Przyluski, "The three factors of Vedic culture", *Indian Culture*, Calcutta, I, 1934-5, 375-80.

such profound and sharply defined expression in Zoroastrianism itself.[71] A land such as Iran, it has been said, "rears up no monks or ascetics . . . but men of action, who are inclined to see life as a perpetual struggle against evil forces. Vigilance and strenuousness were precepts enjoined by the nature of the land itself, long before they were set down in the Avesta".[72] As for the other question, the influence of indigenous peoples on the Iranians,[73] it is impossible to establish any from the *Gāthās* themselves or the oldest parts of the Younger Avesta, although one or two traces can be found in later portions,[74] and such influences were evidently exerted in course of time (from perhaps the 8th or 7th century B.C.) on the Medes and Persians in Western Iran, where presumably the numbers of Iranian immigrants were fewer and more of the earlier inhabitants survived.

Neither the Iranians nor the Indians of old possessed any chronological system or means of absolute dating. They were unable, therefore, to create historical records (other than the celebration of heroic achievements, king-lists, and mnemonic catalogues of great events). The timelessness of their religious literature creates greater confusion with the Avesta than with the Vedas, because the latter became a closed canon relatively early, and were transmitted therefore orally but in a form as fixed as if they had been enshrined in books. In Iran only the words of Zoroaster himself were strictly memorised, syllable by syllable. Other religious works commanded a less scrupulous reverence, and were handed down in the more fluid tradition of "living, variable, anonymous" oral composition.[75] In such a tradition fixed elements of subject-matter, diction and style are carried along by a current of fresh improvisation from one generation to the next. This oral literature tends to be highly conservative (because its existence is only possible through intensive training and cultivation), and yet is capable of innovation, since new elements can readily be adopted and harmonised with the old, as each generation composes the texts anew within the established tradition. No differences of

[71] See, e.g., C. P. Tiele, *Geschichte der Religion im Altertum*, German transl. by G. Gehrich, Gotha 1903, II 85-7; E. Lehmann, *Die Perser* (*Lehrbuch der Religionsgeschichte*, begründet von Chantepie de Saussaye, 4th ed., ed. A. Bertholet and E. Lehmann, Tübingen 1925), II 212.

[72] Tiele, op. cit., 87.

[73] For a survey of the pre-Iranian peoples of the plateau and bordering lands see, e.g. Ghirshman, *Iran*, 27-72; Frye, *Heritage*, 56-68. A useful bibliography is provided by E. Porada, *Ancient Iran, the art of pre-Islamic times*, London 1965. Recently Italian archaeologists have excavated sites in Seistan which have revealed a rich and ancient civilization in south-eastern Iran, which traded with both Mohenjo-Daro to the east, and Elam to the west, but which, like Elam, evidently succumbed to the Iranians.

[74] Such as *Vd.* II (the account of Yima's *var*), on which see further below, Ch. 3.

[75] Chadwick, *Growth of Literature* III, 880.

style exist to mark the incorporation of new matter, for on each occasion the hymn or prayer springs entire from the lips of priest or poet. All this is strikingly demonstrated in the so-called "Younger" Avesta (younger linguistically, that is, than the *Gāthās*), which contains pagan matter that was evidently already old in Zoroaster's day, but which became blended with the prophet's own teachings, and was added to and modified in minor ways for probably at least a millennium after he lived. There is no means of establishing at what time the surviving texts became more or less stabilised in their present form,[76] and long after a "final" redaction small alterations appear occasionally to have been made. It is possible that some part of the Avesta was written down in the late Parthian period, but the fixed canon was not established until the Sasanian era, apparently as late as the 6th century A.C. But as has been justly said: "It is a mistake in method to identify the final redaction of an Avestan text, which always marks a purely accidental point in the chain of tradition, with its conception and composition".[77] A considerable part of the "Younger" Avesta appears to be ancient in substance and to represent a legacy, devoutly cherished, from a very remote past.

After such an immense time in transmission, during much of which its texts were plainly considered of secondary importance to Zoroaster's *Gāthās*, it is not surprising that the Younger Avesta should be relatively ill-preserved, with those degeneracies in language and confusions in subject matter which are generally found towards the end of a long oral tradition.[78] Nevertheless these texts, and the Pahlavi literature which supplements them, are not only of intrinsic interest, but contain material which is invaluable for understanding both the pagan religion of the ancient Iranians, and the teachings of Zoroaster himself, otherwise enveloped in the sublime obscurities of his great *zaotar* verses. His doctrines, taught at a remote age to people of an archaic and lost culture, are naturally difficult for modern, mainly urban, man to grasp; and though the ethical consequences of those doctrines can still be seen in the conduct of Zoroastrians today, yet inevitably the intellectual outlook of a citizen of Bombay or Tehran in the 20th century differs vastly from that of an inhabitant of

[76] The attribution of the great *yašts* in their existing form to the 5th century B.C., though commonly made, is no more than a guess, since the scraps of evidence on which it was originally based have all proved unreliable, see further in Vol. II.

[77] H. S. Nyberg, *Die Religionen des Alten Iran*, German transl. by H. H. Schaeder, Leipzig 1938, 471 (n. to p. 314).

[78] Thus the language often shows grammatical degeneracy, and there is sometimes confusion in contents, with (in the *yašts*) the same verses, lightly adapted or even identical, occurring addressed to different divinities. Epithets too are transferred occasionally, and in one or two instances the functions of divine beings become confused.

Central Asia three millennia ago. One cannot expect a modern Zoroastrian, unequipped by study, to be able to expound in detail the pristine doctrines of his faith, especially since the learned tradition of his community was stifled by centuries of poverty and persecution, so that no continuity of scriptural exegesis remains. To recover the teachings of Zoroaster in their original form is therefore a difficult matter, for the pursuit of which every aid and scrap of evidence is needed. The best guide remains the tradition of his own community, preserved, it seems, with continuity and consistency (despite the developments inevitable in a long transmission) down to the threshold of modern times. This tradition contains doctrines which (because of borrowings) are profoundly familiar to Christian and Muslim, together with others which are wholly strange, being unique to Zoroastrianism; and it is largely the concentration by individual scholars on either the familiar or the unfamiliar which has produced such divergences in interpreting Zoroaster's teachings. In order to try to grasp these as a whole, and to understand how it is that they have held men's allegiance for so long, it is intended here to consider them not only as doctrine, but also as they found embodiment in observance and cult; and since every prophet of every religion has had to deliver his message in terms comprehensible to his own time and society, it is proposed first to devote several chapters to the pagan faith which nurtured Zoroaster, in the hope of reaching as good an understanding as possible of the beliefs and ways in which he grew up, and from which, as the *Gāthās* show, he derived much that is embodied in his own revelation.

CHAPTER TWO

THE GODS OF PAGAN IRAN

Many divine beings are honoured in the Avesta, and probably the original pantheon of Iranian gods is very largely represented there.[1] The names of some are recorded elsewhere in ancient Iran (notably in tablets and inscriptions from Pars), and a few of the greatest were worshipped also by the Vedic Indians. These particular divinities must have been venerated for countless generations by the Indo-Iranians in their nomad days for their cults to have survived in this manner long after the two peoples had parted and made their slow ways to new and very different homes; and it was ancient nomadism, lived on vast steppes, which gave an especial character to these ancestral gods. The Indo-Iranians, as wanderers, had had no temples with images, such as reduced the divinities of settled peoples to local powers with fixed habitations and merely regional authority. Their gods were seen as exercising unbounded influence throughout the world, their sway being limited only by function, since each had his particular character and task;[2] and their universality was splendidly celebrated by the poets of Iran and India, as in the following verses in honour of Mithra/Mitra: "His place is of the width of the earth", "he looks upon all that is between earth and heaven", "he holds embraced heaven with his greatness, (holds) embraced the earth with his glory."[3] In this the high gods of the Indo-Iranians already resembled the

[1] Although many of the interpretations offered there are out of date, L. H. Gray, "The foundations of the Iranian religions", *JCOI* 15, 1929, 1-228, remains the most complete reference book for the Iranian pantheon, bringing together as it does the Avestan and Pahlavi data for every divine being, as well as providing references to their Vedic counterparts. For a more recent bibliography of studies on the Vedic material see J. Gonda, *Die Religionen Indiens* I, *Veda und älterer Hinduismus*, Stuttgart 1960.

[2] The facts that the gods are distinguished by function, and that there is a basic similarity between the Avestan and Vedic pantheons, makes it impossible to accept the theory advanced by H. S. Nyberg (*Die Religionen des Alten Iran*, German transl. by H. H. Schaeder, Leipzig 1938, repr. 1966) that in Iran the ancient Indo-Iranian pantheon was for a time broken up, with the different Iranian peoples worshipping each their own "supreme gods" *(Hochgötter)*, only to have them brought together again by chance on the old pattern—in Zoroastrianism, in which faith they were uneasily subordinated to Ahura Mazdā, who had previously been only one of their number. Against Nyberg's theory (which was adopted and developed by his pupils S. Wikander and G. Widengren), see F. B. J. Kuiper, *IIJ* V, 1961, 56; Molé, *Culte, mythe et cosmologie dans l'Iran ancien*, Paris 1963, Ch. 1; W. Lentz, *A Locust's Leg, Studies in honour of S. H. Taqizadeh*, London 1962, 143.

[3] *Yt.* 10.44, 75; *RV* 3.59.7. These verses are quoted by P. Thieme, *JAOS* LXXX, 1960, 317, at the end of an admirable exposition of the universality of the Indo-Iranian gods.

Deity of monotheistic religions, and foreshadowed in their greatness the dignity of Zoroaster's own concept of the supreme Lord.

Various collective terms were used by the Indians and Iranians for their divine beings. One was Vedic *deva*, Avestan *daēva*, an ancient word cognate with Latin *deus* and coming from an Indo-European base "shine, be bright". The "Shining Ones" were also called the "Immortals" (Vedic *amṛta*, Avestan *amərša*); and the Iranians generally seem also to have used the term *baga* "one who distributes", a giver of good things. The most interesting expression, however, from the point of view of the history of Zoroastrianism is Vedic *asura*, Avestan *ahura*, which is a title meaning "lord", used in both languages for men as well as gods.[4] In the Vedas this title is freely given to divine beings in general, the one who receives it most often being in fact Dyaus Pitar, "Father Sky",[5] the Indian equivalent of Jupiter, who was originally perhaps the mightiest of the *devas*. In the often more conservative Iranian tradition, however, only three gods are ever addressed as *ahura*. They form a group, appearing closely linked in concept and function; and it seems very likely that it is these three who were the original "Lords" of the Indo-Iranian pantheon, and that it was only gradually that among the Indians their characteristic title came to be used respectfully for other gods also.[6]

According to a coherent interpretation worked out during the present century, the ancient Indo-Iranian *asuras* all personify abstract concepts. In order to comprehend this aspect of Indo-Iranian religion it is vital to grasp the fact that such personifications could become strong and ever-present divinities for their worshippers. "Whatever the origin of the gods which are called abstract many of them attained . . . to genuine and real popular belief, and were every whit as much living to the popular mind as gods for whom we can see a basis in nature".[7] It was indeed general Indo-European usage, it has been said, "to conceive as an active reality every

[4] For references to discussions of the word see J. Duchesne-Guillemin, "L'étude de l'iranien ancien au vingtième siècle", *Kratylos* VII, 1962, 18; T. Burrow, *JRAS* 1973, 127-8.

[5] See P.v. Bradke, *Dyāus Asura, Ahura Mazdā und die Asuras*, Halle 1885. On the use of the term *deva* in the Rigveda see C. W. J. van der Linden, *The concept of deva in the Vedic age*, Diss. Utrecht 1954, cited by Gonda, op. cit., 41 n. 63; and on *daēva* in the Avesta most recently E. Benveniste, "Hommes et dieux dans l'Avesta", *Festschrift W. Eilers*, Wiesbaden 1967, 144-7.

[6] See von Bradke, 42 ff. As he says, this fairly general use of what was probably in origin a particular honorific seems in accord with the Vedic tendency to address each of the great gods in the same laudatory terms. See also Gonda, op. cit., 46-7.

[7] A. B. Keith, *The religion and philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads*, Harvard 1925, 203.

force whose manifestation is perceived".[8] Hence what would now be regarded as an abstraction, such as justice or valour or truth, was seen of old as a power. The process whereby this power, being deified, acquired a character and physical traits, and came to be endowed with myths and worshipped through particular rituals, is one which lies hidden in prehistory; but it must have resembled the making of a pearl, with layer upon layer of belief and observance being added around the grit of the original concept.

In the case of the *asuras* this process must have been going on for several thousand years before the oldest surviving texts in their honour were composed; and it is plainly, therefore, no easy matter to retrieve the primary concept and comprehend the fundamental nature of these gods. The one among them who best lends himself to study, and through whom one may therefore hope to reach an understanding of the whole triad, is Vedic Mitra, Iranian Mithra. Not only are there Vedic verses addressed to this god, but the longest of the Avestan *yašts* is devoted to him. He remains, moreover, a much-loved divinity among the Zoroastrians, and there is accordingly a wealth of material both ancient and modern concerning his cult and worship. Further, a common noun *mithra* exists in Avestan, a *mitra* in Sanskrit, which provide keys for the unlocking of his ancient mystery.

The Vedic Mitra was known to the West before the Avestan Mithra; and in the Mithraism of the Roman soldiery—a religion of mixed origins[9]—the Iranian god was celebrated as a divinity linked with the sun. The earliest interpreters of the Vedas saw the Indian faith as a primitive one, and understood its gods to be in the main personifications of natural forces or phenomena; and Mitra was accordingly taken at first to be a solar deity. The Avestan Mithra is also associated with the sun; and so students of Iranian religion likewise accepted this as the primary concept of the god. The Avesta common noun *mithra* demonstrably, however, means something like "pact, contract, covenant", that is, an agreement entered into between men; and in 1907 A. Meillet presented a lucidly-

[8] A. Meillet, *Trois conférences sur les Gāthā de l'Avesta*, 59. On this subject see most recently J. Gonda, *Some observations on the relations between "Gods" and "powers" in the Veda*, 's-Gravenhage 1957. The Indo-Iranian "abstract" gods have their counterparts in the pagan pantheons of Greece and Rome (e.g. Nike "Victory", Dike, "Justice", Fides "Fidelity"); but it is nevertheless difficult for modern scholars to enter into this aspect of ancient religious life, and Nyberg for one denied the validity of the concept, seeing in what others call "abstract" divinities rather the personification of "social collectives", who represented the society of those who worshipped them in its various aspects, religious, political and economic. See his *Religionen des Alten Iran*, 70, 82, 118 et passim.

[9] It is not proposed to discuss this religion, which seems largely alien to Iran, anywhere in the present book. For some recent work on it see *Mithraic Studies*, ed. J. R. Hinnells, 2 vols., Manchester 1975.

reasoned case for regarding the Indo-Iranian Mitra as the personification of the power which lay in such undertakings.[10] As he pointed out, in past times "the contract was in principle a religious act, encircled by prescribed ceremonies, made with certain rites; and the words which accompanied it were not those of simple individual undertakings; they were those of formulas [i.e. *mąthras*], endowed with a force of their own, which would, by virtue of this inner potency, turn back against any man who should transgress them. The Indo-Iranian *Mitra-* is at the same time 'contract' and the power immanent in the contract".[11] Having reached this conclusion, he suggested a possible etymology for the word, from an IE verbal base **mei* "exchange".[12]

Meillet probably chose the French word "contrat" to render the ancient Indo-Iranian concept because this had been invested with a certain grandeur by Rousseau's exposition of "le contrat social". In English "contract" has only narrowly legalistic associations, and hence some scholars using this language have preferred the term "covenant", with its richer religious and moral overtones.[13] "Loyalty to the covenant" is possibly, moreover, the nearest approximation that one can achieve in English to the ethical aspect of the divinity.[14] Since this phrase is too clumsy for general purposes, the term "loyalty" is sometimes used by itself in the following pages.

Meillet's interpretation was at once accepted by several leading Iranists, but the first reaction of Vedic scholars seemed adverse.[15] The suggestion was more difficult for them to entertain, because in Sanskrit the common noun *mitra* means not "covenant" but "friend".[16] The sense "covenant" survives, it is true, in the compound *hitá-mitra* "having established a covenant";[17] but the idea of contractual undertakings is by

[10] "Le dieu indo-iranien Mitra", *JA* 1907, 143-59.

[11] Ibid., 156.

[12] For further discussion of the possible etymology of the word see the references given by I. Gershevitch, *The Avestan hymn to Mithra*, Cambridge 1959, 28 n.

[13] This rendering has been used by H. W. Bailey and others. Gonda's objection to it (*The Vedic god Mitra*, Leiden 1972, 109), that there is no undertaking between Mitra and his worshippers comparable to that between Jehovah and the Jews is not valid. The English word is not used solely in this connection, but is also, like contract, a common legal term.

[14] Cf. German "Vertragstreue" proposed by B. Geiger, *Die Aməša Spəntas*, Vienna 1916, 246, and adopted by Lommel and others.

[15] See, e.g., A. Hillebrandt, *Vedische Mythologie* II, 2nd ed., Breslau 1929, 49; H. Oldenberg, *Die Religion des Veda*, 2nd ed., Stuttgart-Berlin 1916, 188-90.

[16] On the gender and form of this noun see Thieme, *Mitra and Aryaman*, *Trans. of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences*, 41, 1957, 38 n. 25; Gonda, *op. cit.*, 114-5.

[17] See L. Renou, *Grammaire de la langue védique*, 137; H. W. Bailey, *TPS* 1953, 40; contra Gonda, op. cit., 106 n. 6 (translating instead "with whom one has made friends" or "whose friendship is beneficial").

no means prominent in the Vedic texts concerning the god.[18] After some decades Meillet's theory was, however, strongly endorsed by the comparativist G. Dumézil, who gave it wide currency;[19] by the Sanskritist P. Thieme, who developed it with precise scholarly arguments;[20] and by the Iranist I. Gershevitch, who likewise lent it the support of deeply learned consideration.[21] By now it is probably accepted by the majority of those working in these fields; but there are still individual scholars who argue vigorously against it. The fact that Persian has a word *mihr* meaning "loving kindness, friendship", taken in connection with Sanskrit *mitra* "friend", led Herzfeld, for example, to maintain that "the god bore the name Mitra already in the Aryan epoch, not as a pale personification of the notion "contract" . . . but as 'the friend'";[22] and recently Lentz has followed him in so far as to hold that the essential concept is one of a beneficent force.[23] His interpretation, that the Avestan Mithra represents "the striving of man to act according to the religion by telling the truth and by behaving in a balanced way and with liberality towards his neighbours"[24] seems, however, too general to be helpful for understanding the genesis of the god. An Indianist, J. Gonda, has nevertheless come to somewhat similar conclusions on the basis of the Vedas alone, which show, he considers, that "the main idea the god stands for [is] the maintenance, without wrath or vengeance, of right, orderly relations, manifestations of which were, first and foremost, the active benevolence and willingness to help and redress".[25] Thus deliberately to ignore the evidence of the Avestan *yašt* to Mithra, which bears many marks of antiquity, hardly seems sound scholarly procedure, however; and the weakness of this approach is, as Gonda himself admits,[26] that it then becomes difficult to discover any coherence in the various functions attributed to the divinity. The same problem must be felt, one would think, by those who still maintain that the identification of Mitra with the sun is primary;[27] whereas those who uphold the concept of the "covenant" as fundamental

[18] But cf. *droghamitra* "whose covenant is a lie", *amitra* "without covenant", that is, not recognizing the sacredness of covenants, see Thieme, *JAOS* LXXX, 1960, 307.

[19] *Mitra-Varuṇa*, Paris 1940.

[20] Op. cit. See also his further treatment in *Mithraic Studies* I, ed. Hinnells, 21-39.

[21] Op. cit.

[22] *Zoroaster and his World* I, Princeton 1947, 483. One notes the persistence of the idea that such a personification must necessarily be "pale".

[23] "The 'social functions' of the Old Iranian Mithra", *Henning Mem. Vol.*, 245-55.

[24] Art. cit., 252.

[25] Op. cit., 112.

[26] Ibid., 80.

[27] For references to the works of Indian scholars who take this position see Gonda, op. cit., 130.

have produced what seem adequate explanations for all those traits which are common to the Indian and Avestan texts.[28]

To study Mitra/Mithra is naturally not easy; for after thousands of years of worship and invocation the god of the Avesta and Vedas is no longer a simple personification, but has grown into a powerful deity of manifold activities. Nevertheless, it seems possible to discern a fundamental harmony reconciling all his functions. One of the striking features of his activity is that he is concerned with upholding the great Indo-Iranian principle of *ṛta/aša*.[29] This term, it is now generally accepted, represents a concept which cannot be precisely rendered by any single word in another tongue.[30] It stands, it seems, for "order" in the widest sense: cosmic order, by which night gives place to day and the seasons change; the order of sacrifice, by which this natural rhythm is strengthened and maintained; social order, by which men can live together in harmony and prosperity; and moral order or "truth". In both India and Iran to possess *ṛta* or *aša*, to be *ṛtavan* or *ašavan*, was to be a just and upright being; and when used of the dead these words implied that the departed was blessed in the hereafter, having attained the Paradise which he deserved.[31] In the Vedas *ṛta* is opposed to the negative *anṛta*,[32] with which is associated *druh* "falsehood". The Iranian Mithra, as lord of the covenant, *mithra*, is the natural foe of the *mithrō.druj*, the man who is false to the pact he has made;[33] and it is presumably because such falsehood is a breach of moral *aša* that the god came to be regarded by extension as the protector of *aša* in all its aspects—a role of such grandeur that

[28] The later Indian texts inevitably yield a number of over-subtle elaborations, with Mitra as with other gods, to which, in isolation, no weight can be attached. Thus it is not a valid argument concerning the genesis of the Indo-Iranian Mitra to declare, as Gonda does (op. cit., 86): "I cannot possibly say how the god . . should as the originator of a reed used as a catheter have anything to do with a contract".

[29] By a sound change peculiar to Avestan, Indo-Iranian *rt* > *š*; the Old Persian equivalent of the word is *arta*. On the basic unity of the Indian and Iranian conceptions see Geiger, *Die Aməša Spəntas*, 164 ff. In the Vedas *ṛta*, a neuter noun, represents a principle rather than a divinity, and this was presumably the case in pagan Iran also.

[30] For a general discussion, with bibliography, see H. Lüders, *Varuṇa* II *(Varuṇa und das Ṛta)*, aus dem Nachlass herausgegeben von L. Alsdorf, Göttingen 1959, 403-6. Lüders himself translated *ṛta* as "truth", and Gershevitch, *AHM*, passim, followed him in rendering Av. *aša* in the same way; but subsequently he accepted the arguments of Kuiper (*IIJ* V, 1961, 41-2) that to do so was to restrict the significance of the word unduly. See more recently Gonda, *Rel. Indiens* I, 77-9.

[31] On the different destinations of the dead in Indo-Iranian belief see Ch. 4, below. On *ašavan/ṛtavan* see Bailey, *Zor. Problems*, 87 n. 4. Kuiper, *IIJ* IV, 1960, 185 f. has suggested that except in Zoroastrianism these adjectives were used *only* for the dead. (So, earlier, J. H. Kramers also, see Kuiper, *IIJ* VIII, 1964, 129 n. 168). Further Gershevitch, *JNES* XXIII, 1964, 18-19; *BSOAS* XVII, 1955, 483.

[32] Sin, as a breach of heavenly law or order, is described in the *Brāhmaṇas* as *anṛta*, see S. Rodhe, *Deliver us from evil*, Lund-Copenhagen 1946, 159-61.

[33] See, e.g. *Yt.* 10.2, 82.

in India it came to overshadow his primary concern, which was with *ṛta* as it affected undertakings entered into among men. In his Avestan *yašt* Mithra is said to direct men "into the path of *aša (ašahe paiti pantąm)*"[34] and to bestow on them "possession of *aša (ašavasta-)*".[35] He tirelessly guards those who are *ašavan*,[36] and destroys the wicked who attack them.[37]

To know who is *ašavan*, Mithra must assess the actions of men, and see who keep the many covenants, *mithras*, that hold society together, who betray them. The wide range of these covenants is indicated in his *yašt*, where the list includes agreements between friends and fellow-citizens, the contracts of trading partners, and the marriage bond joining husband and wife, as well as treaties entered into between states.[38] With so much to watch over, the god must be ever alert. As it is said in the Veda, "unblinking, Mitra regards the settlements of men";[39] and for this reason it used to be thought, the god came to be associated with the sun which from dawn to dusk makes its own unwinking way above men's heads as they go about their daily affairs.[40] The primary link between divinity and planet is evidently more fundamental than this, however, and arose through an original association of Mithra, lord of the covenant, with fire; for it appears from both the Iranian and Indian sources that it was ancient custom to swear to covenants by Mithra, their personified power, in the presence of fire,[41] which, whether as the flame on the hearth, sustaining

[34] *Yt.* 10.86.
[35] *Yt.* 10.33, 65 (on this word see Gershevitch, *AHM*, 163).
[36] E.g., *Yt.* 10.45, 120.
[37] E.g. *Yt.* 10.76.
[38] *Yt.* 10.116-7 (on which see Gershevitch's commentaries, *AHM*, 266-8). Lentz (*Henning Mem. Vol.*, 246-7) took this passage as evidence against the interpretation of *mithra* as "covenant", since other pairs are mentioned (brothers, father and son) who are linked by a blood tie, not by any specific undertaking; but Thieme and Gershevitch both interpret the passage as referring to compacts entered into by those who have such natural relationships, and not to the relationships themselves. See in more detail Thieme, *Mithraic Studies* I, ed. Hinnells, 24-5.
[39] *RV* 3.59.1 (a verse from the only hymn in the Rigveda addressed to Mitra alone. For detailed treatments of this hymn see Thieme, *Mitra and Aryaman*, 38-59; Gonda, *The Vedic god Mitra*, 91-101).
[40] On Mithra/Mitra and the sun see Meillet, *JA* 1907, 150-4; Thieme, op. cit., 37; Gershevitch, *AHM*, 35-40; Gonda, *The Vedic god Mitra*, 54-61.
[41] For classical and Armenian references to the Persian custom of swearing by Mithra, and also by sun or fire, see F. Cumont, *Textes et monuments figurés relatifs aux mystères de Mithra*, Brussells 1899, I 229 n. 2. Numerous examples can be added for the Sasanian period from the lives of Christian martyrs, e.g., the words of Shābuhr II: "I swear by the Sun, Judge of all the earth", in which sun and Mithra are plainly identified (see O. Braun, *Ausgewählte Akten persischer Märtyrer, Bibliothek der Kirchenväter*, 30). For a similar Sogdian oath, taken "in the presence of Mithra, Judge of creation" see Gershevitch, *AHM*, 34-5. For oaths taken in the presence of fire see Boyce, "On Mithra's part in Zoroastrianism", *BSOAS* XXXII, 1969, 27-8. For parallel evidence in connection with the Vedic Mitra see further below. The practice of swearing by the sun can still be found in Parsi legal documents of the 18th century, see Vol. IV.

life, or the sun in the sky, controlling times and seasons, represented *ṛta/aša*, the due order of things. It was fire, moreover, which by the judicial ordeal might in the end convict the *mithrō.druj* of falseness and bring him to a terrible death.[42] Hence fire could be regarded as the agent of Mithra, and god and element became closely linked—so closely that gradually in both Iran and India Mithra came to be hailed as a solar deity. This aspect of his is already beginning to emerge in his ancient *yašt*; but there, since it is a hymn of praise and not a *mąthra* of oath-taking, the god's association with the sun is celebrated not in terms of its fiery essence, but rather in connection with its stately progress through the sky. Thus he is described as appearing at dawn even before the planet,[43] and travelling with it in majesty each day on its course above the world.[44]

This splendid concept led to the development of another, minor function being attributed to the Lord Covenant; for since he is himself unsleeping, and companion of the sun as it wakes men at dawn, Mithra is hailed as the foe of Sloth, the "long-armed witch Būšyąstā",[45] who seeks to keep people lying idle abed. Two other secondary functions of his harmonize well with his association with the sun, but evidently developed more directly from his primary concept as lord of the covenant. Thus it is he who protects the sacrifice, which should be offered to the gods early in the day, between dawn and noon. That Mithra, companion of the rising sun, should guard these particular hours seems appropriate; but his protection of the act of sacrifice is plainly primarily because this is itself the fulfilment of a pact between gods and men, and so comes within his particular jurisdiction.[46] Then he is invoked as "giver of life" *(gayō-dā-)*, and as "he who makes the rain fall and plants grow" *(tat.āpa-, ukhšyat. urvara-)*,[47] and the Vedic Mitra is similarly hailed as bringing rain, vegetation and health. These traits too could be interpreted as belonging to the

[42] On the ordeal by fire see further below, pp. 35-6.
[43] See *Yt.* 10.13, 142, and the comments by Gershevitch, *AHM* 31, 319-20. In the 3rd century A. C. Manichaean missionaries to Parthia adopted Mithra to represent a divinity connected with the east, see Boyce, "On Mithra in the Manichaean pantheon", *A Locust's Leg, Studies in honour of S. H. Taqizadeh*, 47; and in the next century one encounters Shābuhr II ordering a Christian to pray to "the sun, the God of the East" (Braun, loc. cit.), which again shows the fusion of sun- and Mithra-worship. On the connection of the Vedic Mitra with daybreak see Thieme, *Mitra and Aryaman*, 69, Gonda, *The Vedic God Mitra*, 58-9. The ever-vigilant Mithra is present, however, not only with the sun by day, but also with the luminaries of the night sky, see Boyce, *BSOAS* XXXII, 1969, 30 with n. 103.
[44] See *Yt.* 10.16,67,99,118.
[45] *Yt.* 10.97 (on which see Benveniste, *RHR* CXXX, 1945, 14-16; Boyce, art. cit., 25 n. 74).
[46] On this aspect of sacrifice see further below, Ch. 6.
[47] *Yt.* 10.65,61.

god because of his link with the "life-giving" sun;[48] but they probably originate rather in the ancient, widespread belief that when a ruler was upright and loyal to his undertakings, then his country was rewarded with rain and good crops, whereas a king's wrong-doing brought drought and pestilence.[49] "The scoundrel who breaks a covenant destroys the whole land."[50]

Mithra not only oversees all covenants,[51] but having seen, he judges; and it is as the Judge that he is invoked in his *yašt*,[52] and has been worshipped by Iranians down the ages[53]—a being unswervingly just, and never to be deceived. Because he is just, he is a powerful protector to those who deserve his benevolence; and it is thought that it was as protector that he gained his standard Iranian epithet of "having wide pastures" *(vouru.gaoyaoti)*[54]—pastures, that is, in which the nomad Iranians, keeping faith with him, could safely graze their herds. And because to the loyal he was the kindliest of gods, without caprice or terror, his name, it is suggested, came to stand for the Friend of the *ašavan*, and so in time for "friend" or "friendliness" in general.[55] But being just, Mithra had inevitably another aspect, that of the stern and terrible punisher of the faithless, whom he smites and crushes.[56] As such he is a "wrathful Lord",[57] a being to be dreaded; but since men more readily regard their enemies as wicked than themselves, through this aspect Mithra became also a war god, fighting for the righteous Iranians against their foes.[58] His concept was then enriched with all the trappings of a warrior, added to those of a solar deity: he is a chariot-rider whose white horses, shod with silver and gold, cast no shadow;[59] a fighter armed with a mighty mace of

[48] *Yt.* 10.13. On the meaning *aməša* as an epithet for the sun see Thieme, *Studien z. indogerm. Wortkunde und Religionsgeschichte*, 24.
[49] See Thieme, in *Mithraic Studies* I, ed. Hinnells, 31-2; cf. Gershevitch, *AHM*, 32-3.
[50] *Yt.* 10.2.
[51] See *Yt.* 10.2 ("truly the covenant is for both, the wicked man and the righteous").
[52] See *Yt.* 10.81, 92.
[53] See Boyce, *BSOAS* XXXII, 23 with nn. 58, 59, 62, 27 with n. 88, 28, 29 with n. 99.
[54] See Thieme, *BSOAS* XXXIII, 1960, 273-4; Benveniste, *JA* 1960, 421-9.
[55] In *AHM*, 30, 41 n. 3. Gershevitch took the existence of Vedic *mitra* "friend" as "a case of accidental homonymity". This explanation would have to embrace also Persian *mihr* "friendliness" and other cognate words, and does not seem to have won acceptance. Since then (*TPS* 1969, 190) he has interpreted the Elamite proper name *miššamiššu* as a rendering of OP **visāmissa*, the equivalent of Vedic *viśvāmitra* "friend of all" (comparing also *umiša* = *humitra*?). If this interpretation is valid, it attests the meaning of *mithra* "friend" already in ancient Iran. In this connection Dr. Shapur Shahbazi has drawn my attention to the fact that the name Kūh-i Rahmat for the mountain behind Persepolis translates an older Kūh-i Mihr, see Muḥammad Qazvini and 'Abbas Iqbal, *Shaddu'l-Azār*, 371.
[56] See *Yt.* 10.29. For his punishment of the armies of the wicked see ibid., vv. 37 ff., 45, 97 ff.
[57] *Yt.* 10.69.
[58] See, e.g. *Yt.* 10.4 with 8-11.
[59] *Yt.* 10.68, 102, 125, 136.

bronze,[60] and with spear, bow and arrows, knife and slingstones.[61] A martial character is nowhere ascribed to the Vedic Mitra; but Thieme has found small indications which show, he thinks, that both Mitra and Varuṇa once possessed a warrior aspect which they had lost by the time the Rigveda took its final shape;[62] and there, it seems, the punitive aspect of the two Indo-Iranian gods has moreover been largely ascribed to Varuṇa, leaving Mitra (in so far as he is separately celebrated) more purely benevolent. There are, however, verses which show that he nevertheless resembled his Iranian counterpart in having the power to dismay as well as to delight his worshippers, in being both "wicked and very good to men"[63], as for instance: "May we not be under the wrath of Varuṇa and Vayu, not (under that) of Mitra, who is most dear to men".[64] "These two [Mitra and Varuṇa] have many slings, they are fetterers of untruth *(anṛta-)*, difficult for the deceitful mortal to circumvent".[65] These and other similar passages clearly indicate that the Vedic priests too ascribed a stern and wrathful character to Mitra on occasion, even if they no longer gave prominence to this aspect of the god. Like most other Indo-Iranian divinities, Mithra was conceived in human shape, even if greater than any mortal king; but because of his superhuman vigilance he had the epithets "having a thousand perceptions, ten thousand eyes",[66] terms which presumably referred to his servitors, the "watchers of the covenant" *(spasō... mithrahe)*, who gaze out from every height, over every quarter of the compass, noting "those who first break the covenant".[67] (The spies of the Achaemenian kings were similarly spoken of as being their "eyes" and "ears",[68] and the usage appears to be old.)

As well as these vigilant spirits ever at his service, Mithra had close associates among the other gods—for no member of the Avestan or Vedic pantheon is ever seen in isolation. Lesser divinities encircle him; and above all the Vedic Mitra acts constantly in partnership with Varuṇa, his mighty

[60] *Yt.* 10.96, 132 (on which see Henning apud Boyce, *BSOAS* XXXII, 1969, 16 n. 31).
[61] *Yt.* 10.102, 129-31.
[62] See the passages cited by him in *JAOS* LXXX, 311-2. In general, however, "in the RV Mitra and Varuṇa do not .. do their fighting themselves. The fighting is done by Indra", Thieme, "The concept of Mitra in Aryan belief", *Mithraic Studies* I, ed. Hinnells, 30.
[63] *Yt.* 10.29.
[64] *RV* 7.62.4cd, cited by Thieme, art. cit.
[65] *RV* 7.63.3ab, cited by Thieme, art. cit.
[66] *Yt.* 10.7,82 et passim. This trait survives in the Parthian Manichaean texts, where the Third Messenger, identified with Mithra, has the epithet *hazār-čašm* "thousand-eyed". See Boyce in *A Locust's Leg, Studies presented to S. H. Taqizadeh*, 53.
[67] *Yt.* 10.45 (for the translation see P. Tedesco, *Language* XXXVI, 1960, 132).
[68] See H. H. Schaeder, *Iranica* I, Berlin 1934, 1-24; H. Lommel, *Oriens* VI, 1953, 323 ff.

peer. Varuṇa is one of the two chief gods of the Rigveda,[69] the other being the *deva* Indra. He, like Indra, is hailed as universal king *(samrāj)*, one whose "ordinances are established" *(dhṛtavrata)*, these being obeyed even by the other gods.[70] He was envisaged as holding royal state, clad in golden mantle and shining robe, driving, like Mithra, in a chariot, and having in the highest heaven his golden abode. He was the "all-knowing lord" *(asura viśvavedas)*, ever aware of the deeds of men. "If a man is standing or going, and if he is jumping—if he goes into hiding, if he stiffens—whatever two men deliberate, having sat down together, king Varuṇa knows that as the third one" (*AV* 4.16.2-9).[71] Like the Iranian Mithra, he is a thousand-eyed, having his spies to observe the world; and the two divinities share a moral nature and preoccupations. Ethically Varuṇa is indeed the noblest of the Vedic gods, abhorring sin, forgiving the penitent but punishing the transgressor who awakens his sometimes bitter wrath. His worshippers approach him with fear and trembling, and yet also with trust. "Varuṇa is on a footing of friendship with his worshipper, who communes with him in his celestial abode, and sometimes sees him with the mental eye. The righteous hope to behold in the next world Varuṇa and Yama, the two kings who reign in bliss".[72] This great ethical being is endowed, like Vedic Mitra, with *māyā*, the supernatural power, hidden and incomprehensible, through which he acts. This mysterious force could also be thought of, at least by Vedic times, as something capricious; and according to the poets it enabled its possessors to deceive others while themselves remaining undeceived.[73] It is suggested that it was through the constant attribution of *māyā* to the *asuras* that their title became gradually associated with evil, and eventually came to be used also of dark forces opposed to the gods. Those scholars are surely right, however, who maintain that deception and caprice had no part in the original character of Varuṇa.[74]

In his ethical aspect Varuṇa, together with Mitra, is the guardian of *ṛta* as moral order. He also, together with Mitra, protects *ṛta* as order in the natural world. The two gods are indeed so closely linked in their beneficent activities that they are commonly invoked together by a compound Mitrāvaruṇā of a type called by the Hindu grammarians *dvandva* or

[69] On him see most recently Thieme, "King Varuṇa", *German Scholars in India* I, *The Chowkamba Sanskrit Series Office*, Varanasi 1973, 333-49.
[70] See *RV* 4.42.1; 8.41.4.
[71] Transl. Thieme, art. *cit.*, 340.
[72] A. A. Macdonell, *A Vedic reader for students*, Oxford 1917, 135.
[73] *RV* 2.27.3; but the concept is evidently that these gods were able to trick the deceitful man. See A. Bergaigne, *La religion védique* III, Paris 1883, 199-200.
[74] See, e.g., Oldenberg, *Die Religion des Veda*, 300-1.

"pair" compounds (since the two elements have the same relationship as if they were linked by the conjunction "and").[75] So closely and regularly are the two gods associated, indeed, that they became for Vedic poets *the* typical pair, and so could be referred to metaphorically through almost any pair of things, antithetical or complementary, such as night and day, left hand and right, indrawn and outdrawn breath.[76] But although this suggests that originally they were of equal power and standing, in the Vedic hymns Varuṇa has by far the greater prominence, hugely overshadowing his divine partner. Vast cosmic powers are assigned to him, for it was he who established heaven and earth, and *kṣatra* "dominion" is especially his. Through his *māyā* he controls the forces of nature, sending the dawn and causing the honey of rain to fall upon the earth. Water indeed belongs peculiarly to Varuṇa in all its manifestations.[77] He is addressed as "Child of the Waters" *(apāṁ śiśur)*,[78] and water is reverenced as holding him, and is used therefore to invoke his presence. If in Vedic times a man built a house, "he should among many other ritual acts pour some water into a barrel while pronouncing the stanza: 'Hither must king Varuṇa come with the abundant (waters); at this place must he stay, rejoicing'."[79]

So close is this association that it has been suggested that the primary concept of Varuṇa was that of a personification of the Waters themselves.[80] Another interpretation was that he was god of the Sky, to be connected with Greek Ouranos[81] (an identification long since rejected both on philological grounds, and because of the lack of actual connection between Varuṇa and the sky in the Indian texts or ritual). He has also been seen as god of the moon.[82] When, however, Meillet propounded his theory of the ethical, "abstract" nature of Mitra, he pointed out that, since Varuṇa is so closely linked with him, it is reasonable to suppose that the primary concepts of the two deities were very much alike. Accordingly he suggested the possibility that Varuṇa's name came from the IE verbal root *ver* "speak", **varuna* being perhaps a lost common noun meaning itself "law"

[75] In such compounds the shorter name regularly stands first, so that priority is not proof of pre-eminence.
[76] Thieme points out that it is therefore misleading to read overmuch significance into any particular associations of this type, as has been done especially with regard to the pair "night and day".
[77] See in detail Lüders, *Varuṇa* I *(Varuṇa und die Wasser)*, Göttingen 1951.
[78] *VS* 10.7 (cited by Lüders, op. cit. 50-1).
[79] *KŚS* 25.5.28 (cited by Gonda, *The Vedic god Mitra*, 31).
[80] For references see Lüders, op. cit., 6-7.
[81] For the literature see ibid., op. cit., 3-4.
[82] See ibid., 4, 6 with n. 1.

or even (as a synonym of **mitra*) "contract".[83] This suggestion was taken up by other scholars; but Peterson,[84] proposing a derivation instead from the IE root *ver* "bind, tie", interpreted the meaning of the postulated **varuna* as "binding utterance, oath"—the solemn truthful affirmation which constrains a man, and which must of old have been invested with the same latent supernatural power as the solemn pact or bond. This interpretation is in harmony with the mythological trait of Varuṇa's whereby he binds the sinner with fetters, and removes sin as if untying a rope. It was further developed by Lüders in his massive monograph on Varuṇa, in which he pursued two main themes: how, through the oath, Varuṇa acquired his secondary trait as god of the Waters, and how, as god of the oath, he was with Mitra the natural guardian of *ṛta* in the sense of "truth". The god's association with the waters arose, he suggested, from an ancient link between Varuṇa, oath-taking, and this element, whereby a man swore a solemn oath by the god in the presence of water, or holding water in his hand.[85] He further pointed out[86] that this accords admirably with the fact that in both India and Iran oaths and compacts are sworn by Mithra and by fire. The two gods of verbal undertakings were thus each, it seems, associated with one of the two elements which were the main objects of the Indo-Iranian cult.

The link between Mitra and Varuṇa and the two elements was evidently stronger, moreover, than one created merely by invoking these gods in their presence, and involved the use of fire and water in ordeals to test veracity, whereby the divinity was made the judge. The evidence, in both Iran and India, is relatively late, but there is no reason to doubt its authenticity or the traditional nature of the practices involved. Both forms of ordeal were undergone by those accused of some form of wrongdoing, who had sworn their innocence. In the ordeal by water, as described in the *Yājñavalkya* 2.108f.,[87] the accused was required to submerge himself. As the water closed over his head an arrow was shot, and a nimble

[83] See *JA* 1907, 156-8.

[84] H. Peterson, "Einige Bemerkungen zu den Götternamen Mitra und Varuṇa", *Studier tillegnade E. Tegnér*, 1918, 231 ff.

[85] On the link between Indian oath-taking and the waters see Lüders, op. cit., II 655-74; Thieme, *Studien z. idg. Wortkunde*, 53-5. Both scholars have sought to establish an Indo-European form of oath sworn by the waters either of death, or of the primeval ocean. (Against Lüders' further development of the idea of a celestial ocean see however K. Hoffmann, *OLZ* XLIX 9/10, 1954, 391-2).

[86] Op. cit., I 12 ff., 28, 38 (with an interesting association of Mitra, fire, and the pact of "friendship of the seven strides"). See also Thieme, *Mitra and Aryaman*, 49 ff., 84; and for references to oath-taking before the Iranian Mithra see above, p. 28 n. 41.

[87] See Lüders, *Varuṇa* I, 31-2; English rendering by Thieme in *German Scholars in India* I, 342.

man sped off to retrieve it. If when he returned the accused was still beneath the water, and alive, his innocence was held to be established. Before submerging he was to "adjure the water *(abhiśāpya kam)*—that is, the divinity present in the water—with the formula: "Through truth protect me, Varuṇa *(satyena mābhirakṣasva, Varuṇa)*".

Several forms of fire ordeal are attested in Iran. In one, said to have been undergone by the warrior-prince Syāvaršan in remote antiquity,[88] two huge fires were lit close to one another, and when they were blazing fiercely, "so that the earth was more radiant than the sky", the hero rode at a furious pace along the narrow way between them. The flames "closed over his head", but because he was innocent he reappeared unscathed, for "when . . . God doth so vouchsafe, the breath of fire is even as the wind". There can be no doubt that for the ancient Iranians the god in question was Mithra the Judge. In the other form of ordeal by fire metal was heated until it melted, and then poured on the naked breast of the accused. If he survived, he was innocent. "If they pour (it) on the body and heart of a wicked man, he is burnt and dies."[89] This form of ordeal inspired Zoroaster's own great vision of the Last Judgment, with the stream of molten metal which will then test the guilt and innocence of all mankind.[90] In historical times it is said to have been undergone by the Sasanian priest Ādurbād ī Mahraspandān to prove the truth of his statement of Zoroastrian orthodoxy against the claims of heretics.[91] Many other varieties of fiery ordeal are said to have been administered by the Iranians of old;[92] and it was, moreover, common usage to oblige a man taking an oath to swallow a drink containing sulphur, the brimstone or "burning stone" of English idiom. (The standard Persian expression for "to swear" remains accordingly "to drink sulphur", *sōgand khordan*). The purpose of this practice was essentially the same as that of the fiery ordeal, for it was believed that if the testifier swore falsely, or in ancient idiom committed *mihr-drūjīh*, "betrayal of the covenant", then the sulphur would burn him up from within, more slowly but no less surely than fire or molten metal would destroy a treacherous man from without. "It is just as when a person falls into a fire, and his body is burnt, and his life endangered, so

[88] See *Shāhnāma*, Tehran ed. (1935-1936), II pp. 550-2, transl. Warner, II 220-1.

[89] *Supp. texts to Šāyest nē-šāyest* XV.17 (ed. Kotwal, 63).

[90] See Ch. 9, below.

[91] See Vol. II.

[92] According to the *dastūrs* of Islamic times there were 33 varieties of such ordeals, see *Rivāyats*, ed. Unvala I 45.9, transl. Dhabhar, 39. On this subject, and on the connection of the fiery ordeal with Mithra, see Boyce, "On Mithra, lord of fire", *Memorandum H. S. Nyberg*, ed. J. Duchesne-Guillemin, Louvain 1975, Vol. I, and further in Vol. IV of the present work.

he who takes a false oath . . . burns up himself, his family and his soul."[93] Hence it was that fire became closely linked both with Mithra and with *aša*, the "truth" which the great *ahura* helped to guard.

There was clearly a parallel development in ancient times with Varuṇa and water, in both cases the god's presence being felt in the actual element which slew or spared. With regard to Varuṇa's own concept Thieme,[94] who endorsed Meillet's interpretation of his nature, suggested that this was probably basically the broad one of "true speech", embracing that of the oath; and this, if one seeks a parallel to Mithra's ethical characteristic of "loyalty", may be yet further extended to "veracity" or "troth". According to these interpretations Varuṇa is thus the personification of an ethical "abstraction" of exactly the same type as Mitra. As Thieme has shown, the sense of "true speech" satisfies admirably certain Rigvedic passages in which the god's name occurs,[95] as well as explaining the "basic similarity and partial identity"[96] of himself and Mitra. Both gods had their great part to play in maintaining human society. Moreover, "veracity" like "loyalty" had cosmic significance of old, since it was "by the magic power of spoken truth *(ṛta)*"[97] that the world was created. Both divinities had also their link with the sacrifice, contractual in Mitra's case, and in Varuṇa's through the power of the truly uttered word, embodied in the sacred *mantras*. This common association with spoken undertakings would explain their being among the gods invoked at the making of the Mitanni treaty;[98] but their functions, although so similar, seem in origin to have been differentiated in this respect, that the covenant personified by Mitra was properly an undertaking to which two parties pledged themselves, whereas the vow presided over by Varuṇa was a one-sided engagement, a personal commitment. This distinction was, however, relatively slight; and in India, as the concepts of the two gods blended, Varuṇa took over most of their common traits, so that, as we have seen, the sternness which in Iran belongs also to the just Mithra in the Vedas is ascribed very largely to his brother *asura*.[99]

The fact that no common noun **varuna* survives in either Vedic or

[93] See *Riv.*, Unvala, I 53.2-7, Dhabhar, 39.
[94] See his *Mitra and Aryaman*, 41 ff.
[95] Ibid., 62 ff.
[96] Ibid., 59.
[97] Ibid., 64.
[98] So Thieme, *JAOS* LXXX, 1960, 306-7.
[99] It has been suggested that Varuṇa is sterner than Mitra, and more concerned than any other Vedic god with sins and transgressions, because the one-sided oath is more readily broken than a pact between two persons, and so his worshippers were constantly penitent; but this seems a little forced.

Avestan means that there is necessarily more conjecture in defining Varuṇa's being than that of Mitra.[100] There are nevertheless some associated words which seem to support the interpretation of the god's name as meaning originally "true utterance". There is Vedic *vratá-*, a much discussed term particularly associated with Varuṇa, which is generally rendered by such English words as "law, ordinance, rule; promise, vow";[101] and in Iranian there occur Avestan *varah*, Pahlavi *var* and *varestān* which earlier were rendered as "ordeal" and "place of the ordeal",[102] but which, it is now suggested,[103] should rather be understood as "oath" and "place of oath-taking".

There is, however, a further difficulty to make the study of Varuṇa more intricate than that of Mitra: there is no god in the Iranian pantheon who is called *Vouruna. (This is the form which, it is thought, his name would have taken in Avestan.[104]) But since it seemed impossible that so great a deity, and one so closely linked with Mitra, should be forgotten in Iran, it was widely assumed that it was he who of old became the "god of the Iranians", growing to be so exalted in their eyes that his worshippers ceased to name him directly, but invoked him instead with reverence as Ahura Mazdā, the "Wise Lord". Thus in the course of time, it was suggested, his personal name, through disuse, became forgotten, and this title alone remained. Such a development is clearly not impossible, and indeed the replacement of a proper name by an appellative seems to have taken place with more than one Iranian divinity.[105] Various arguments have, however, been brought on other grounds against this interpretation. Thus it seems probable that the Iranian Ahura Mazdā was exalted over Mithra even before Zoroaster preached, being recognized as a greater god by the Persians as well as by the Avestan peoples; and this suggests that his Vedic parallel may have been, not Varuṇa, the *dvandva* partner of Mitra, but the nameless Asura or Lord who appears in a few Rigvedic passages as

[100] For objections to the above interpretations see, e.g., Kuiper, *IIJ* III, 210-11. He himself, although rejecting Dumézil's characterization of Mitra and Varuṇa as opposite aspects of "sovereignty" (see his remarks in *Numen* VIII, 1961, 36-9), nevertheless maintains that the close association of the two gods is antithetical rather than complementary, the one loosing, the other binding. (See in more detail his exposition in *IIJ* V, 1961, 46-54.) He further still maintains that Varuṇa's association with water was a primary characteristic (see his article "The Bliss of Aša", *IIJ* VIII, 1964, 106-7, 114-5).
[101] See H.-P. Schmidt, *Vedisch "vratá" und awestisch "urvāta"*, Hamburg 1958; Thieme, *German Scholars in India*, 345. Contra, Gonda, *The Vedic God Mitra*, 9-10, 100 with n. 3 (who suggests rendering the word as "functional rule of conduct").
[102] See Bartholomae, *Air. Wb.* 1365-6.
[103] H. W. Bailey in *Mithraic Studies* I, ed. Hinnells, 14 with n. 29.
[104] See Gershevitch, *AHM*, 47 n.
[105] E.g. *Harahvaitī Arədvī Sūrā, and possibly *Zam Spəntā Ārmaiti, see further below.

a higher being than even these two. He is described as "Our Father, the Asura, who sprinkles down the waters";[106] and to Mitra and Varuṇa their worshippers say: "You two make the sky rain through the magic power *(māyā-)* of Asura;[107] "you two protect your ordinances *(vrata-)* through the magic power of Asura; through truth *(ṛta-)* you rule the universe".[108] The Asura thus appears raised above Mitra and Varuṇa, as Ahura Mazdā is above the Iranian Mithra.

The question then arose, could "Mazdā" (or rather its Indian equivalent) be in fact the missing proper name of this Vedic Asura—was the Iranian god really the Lord Mazdā, as Mithra was the Lord Mithra (Ahura Mithra)?[109] The word *mazdā* has been a perplexity to grammarians, because the inflection is irregular; and philologists have been divided between those who regard it as having a stem in *-ah*, and those (now probably the majority) who understand it as having a stem in *-ā*.[110] Neither interpretation satisfies conclusively all the irregularities; but the divergence of opinion was concerned mainly with the declension of the word, both groups uniting in regarding it as an adjective meaning "wise". Already in the late 19th century, however, A. V. W. Jackson had interpreted Mazdā instead as a substantive, corresponding with the Vedic feminine noun *medhā-* "mental vigour, perceptive power, wisdom"; and he accordingly rendered Ahura Mazdā's name as "Lord Wisdom".[111] This he did without discussion, and without, it seems, evoking much scholarly debate. A few others adopted this interpretation, however, including Benveniste, who argued from it to the ancientness of the concept of the "Lord Wisdom" as "a being of the family of the Asuras."[112] The same interpretation was subsequently proposed again by Sten Konow.[113] He examined the meanings

[106] *RV* 5.83.6d. (This and the following verses are given in Thieme's translation.)
[107] *RV* 5.63.3d.
[108] *RV* 5.63.7bc.
[109] Vedic scholars in the past, considering the question without reference to Iranian parallels, variously identified "the Asura" as the sky-god Dyaus or the rain-god Parjanya, both of whom are referred to as "the Father". For the older literature on the subject see Geiger, *Die Aməša Spəntas*, 218 n. 1. Hillebrandt, *ZII* IV, 212, subsequently upheld the identification of "the Asura" as Dyaus despite Geiger's objections. See also his *Vedische Mythologie*, 2nd ed., 1929, II 9. There have been scholars on the Iranian side who have accepted this identification, and have further sought to identify Ahura Mazdā with this putative Asura Dyaus, rather than with the lesser Varuṇa. See Gray, *Foundations*, 26.
[110] See Kuiper, "Avestan *Mazdā-*", *IIJ* I, 1957, 86-95; H. Humbach, "Ahura Mazdā und die Daēvas", *Wiener Zeitschrift f. d. Kunde Süd- und Ostasiens* I, 1957, 81-94; Thieme in *Zarathustra*, ed. Schlerath, 406-7 (with further references).
[111] See *An Avesta Grammar*, Part I, Stuttgart 1892, 102; *Zoroastrian Studies*, 39; *Persia past and present*, 362.
[112] *The Persian religion according to the chief Greek texts*, Paris 1929, 40.
[113] "Medhā and Mazdā", *Jhā Commemoration Volume, Essays on oriental subjects presented to .. Gaṅgānātha Jhā, Poona Oriental Series* no. 39, Poona, 1937, 217-22.

of Vedic *medhā-*, of which he said: '"insight", "wisdom" and especially "prudence" are English equivalents. It is apparently an abstract term, but such terms were generally conceived as forces with independent existence"'.[114] On the grammatical side he pointed out that in Khotanese Saka the word *urmaysda*, i.e. *auramazdā* (which is there used for the sun[115]) also has irregularities of inflection which suggest the modification of an *ā*-stem.[116] He concluded, like Jackson, that 'Mazdā' was to be understood as the proper name of the Iranian supreme god, this being "an ancient Aryan term, denoting a mental form which was highly valued as an important factor in . . . life".[117] Since there was no evidence on the Vedic side for the divinisation of this concept, he assumed, unlike Benveniste, that it was Zoroaster's own inspiration which "prompted him to proclaim *mazdā* as the highest principle, as the Lord Mazdā".[118] This doctrine, he pointed out, was in harmony with the prophet's teachings concerning the "abstract" Aməša Spəntas who surround the supreme God. Konow's interpretation was rejected by Humbach and by Kuiper,[119] partly on the grounds that Ahura Mazdā was evidently an ancient god, worshipped before Zoroaster taught, but it was warmly endorsed by Thieme, who followed Benveniste in holding that the fundamental harmony was to be sought, not with the Aməša Spəntas of Zoroaster's own revelation, but rather with the two ancient Indo-Iranian *asuras*, the Lords Loyalty and Troth; and who therefore saw the Indian equivalent of Ahura Mazdā in the nameless but supreme Asura of the Rigveda.[120] Grammatically, he suggested, the irregularities in declension of the Iranian Mazdā may arise from attempts to distinguish the inflexion of the proper name, belonging to a masculine god, from that of a feminine abstract noun.[121] This noun, meaning approximately "memory, recollection" occurs once in the Avesta, in the ancient *Yasna Haptaŋhāiti*,[122] where it is interesting to find it set in immediate juxtaposition with Ahura Mazdā's own name, as Mithra's name is set together with the common noun *mithra* in his *yašt*.[123] The passage

[114] Ibid., 218.
[115] The name of the great Ahura was used for the sun by other Iranian peoples of the north east (Khwarezmian *remazd*, Sangleči *remozd*), see Benveniste, *JA* 1960, 74.
[116] Ibid., 219; see also his remarks in *Oriental Studies in honour of C. E. Pavry*, Oxford University Press 1933, 222.
[117] *Jhā Commemoration Vol.*, 220.
[118] Ibid., 221.
[119] Art. cit.
[120] Art. cit., 406-10.
[121] Ibid., 408. Against Humbach's contention that in *Y.* 33.11 *mazdā* can only be an adjective see ibid., 410.
[122] *Y.* 40.1.
[123] *Yt.* 10.3.

(which is in the short poetic section of the *Y. Hapt.*) runs: "Then at these recompensings, O Mazdā Ahura, remember *(mazdąm . . . kərəš)* and fulfil, through your bounty, what comes to you from us . . .".[124] An associated verb *mazdā-* "fix in one's thoughts, remember" occurs twice, once in the *Gāthās* themselves (*Y*.45.1), once in the so-called *Hōm Yašt* (*Y*.9.31), which has a number of archaic elements; and there is also a Gathic noun *mazdātha-* "a memorable thing" (*Y*.30.1).[125] Verb and nouns may all perhaps have disappeared from common use in consequence of Zoroaster's reform, with the even greater reverence which came to be felt then for Ahura Mazdā and the sanctity of his name.

The assumption that the nameless Asura of the Rigveda, the Father, is the Lord Wisdom receives some slight support, Thieme pointed out, from *RV* 8.6.10 (cited earlier in this connection by Konow): "Then I have from my Father the wisdom of truth *(medhā́m ṛtásya)*." Why the Asura should have become so remote already in the Rigvedic period must remain a matter for speculation; but one may suppose the reason to have been the fundamental and pervasive character of wisdom, the basic quality needed by both gods and men for creating and maintaining the world.[126] This might well cause the Lord Wisdom to become either supreme (as among the Iranians) or loftily remote from the daily practical round of cult and worship (as apparently in India), and so in course of time neglected and forgotten.

If one accepts the hypothesis that the Indians once worshipped Asura *Medhā, identical with Ahura Mazdā, as the Asura, this appears to isolate great Varuṇa, leaving him without counterpart in Iran. There is a possibility, however, that not only was Varuṇa worshipped in pagan Iran as a deity distinct from Ahura Mazdā, but that he is in fact still so reverenced by the Zoroastrians today, but under another name.[127] Such a suggestion may seem at first sight to belong among those rash identifications of different deities which have contributed so much to confusing Zoroastrian studies; but in this instance it is not a question of identifying two gods with different names, but of considering afresh the identity of one god known in both Iran and India by what appears to be an attribute only.

[124] On these lines see H. W. Bailey in *Oriental Studies in honour of C. E. Pavry*, 24-5.

[125] *Mazdā-* may also occur in an Old Persian proper name, if Gershevitch is right in interpreting (*TPS* 1969, 181) Elamite *pirramasda* as rendering OP **framazdā-* "of outstanding memory".

[126] On *medhā* and cosmic truth see Kuiper, *IIJ* IV, 1960, 187.

[127] See Boyce, "Varuna's part in Zoroastrianism', *Mélanges E. Benveniste*, ed. M. Moïnfar, Paris 1975, 57–66.

This is the mysterious Apąm Napāt, Vedic Apām Napāt, the "Son of the Waters".[128]

The position of the Zoroastrian Apąm Napāt is in many respects perplexing. As far as the cult is concerned, he seems at first sight a minor deity. No hymn is addressed to him, and no day of the month is assigned to his care. With Haoma and Dahmān Āfrīn he makes up the 30 chief *yazatas* of the Zoroastrian pantheon,[129] and like them he is accordingly invoked in every service dedicated to the divine beings; but in living observance at least no *yasna* is ever devoted to him alone. Yet in the liturgy of every *yasna* service, whenever water is invoked, it is Apąm Napāt who is invoked with it.[130] Moreover, in the divisions of the day (which seem older than the calendar dedications)[131] the morning is set under the protection of great Mithra, the afternoon under that of Apąm Napāt. This means that down the ages every Zoroastrian who has prayed in the afternoon (and the orthodox are required to pray during each watch) has daily invoked the "Son of the Waters". He is therefore a dominant figure in the cult, despite his apparent obscurity.

The same striking anomalies appear in the Avestan texts as in the ritual. Thus in some passages the god appears only as a shadowy, background figure, associated with other more prominent divinities of water. In the hymn to the river-goddess, Arədvī Sūrā, there is an obscure reference to what appears to be a place dedicated to Apąm Napāt, but at it a worshipper sacrifices to Arədvī.[132] In the hymn to Tištrya, god of the rain star, it is said: "Apąm Napāt distributes to the material world those waters assigned to dwelling-places . . .";[133] and another verse runs: "We

[128] *Napāt* is sometimes rendered by Iranists as "grandson", because of the meaning of its derivatives (see H. Hübschmann, *Persische Studien*, 102-3); but in the case of gods, where in the present and similar instances *napāt* appears to imply simply "sprung from", it seems apter to render it, as most Vedic scholars do, by "son" or "child", rather than using a word which suggests a whole divine genealogy. (For a study of *napāt* and its cognates see recently I. Gershevitch, "Genealogical descent in Iranian". *Bulletin of the Iranian Culture Foundation* I, 1973, 71-86.)

[129] The number is usually given as 33, and since the Brahmans recognized 33 gods, the putative coincidence has been regarded as significant; but in fact the figure 33 is an artificial one for the Zoroastrians, for Ahura Mazdā receives the dedications of 4 of the 30 days, so that even with the 3 non-calendarial *yazatas* only 30 individual deities are named. They are listed and their activities described in *GBd.* XXVI, where Apąm Napāt (as "Burz Yazad"), Haoma and Dahmān Āfrīn appear together, §§ 91-4.

[130] *Y*.1.5 et pass.; cf. *Sirōza* I.7, and see further L. H. Gray, *ARW* III, 1900, 32-3. The invocation of Apąm Napāt with the "Mazdā-created Water" also forms part of the liturgy of the preparatory service of the *yasna*, when bowls are filled with water.

[131] On the latter see Vol. II.

[132] *Yt.* 5.72.

[133] *Yt.* 8.34. This task of Apąm Napāt's is mentioned in several places in Pahlavi literature, e.g., *GBd.* VI b.3 (ed. TDA, 62.5; transl. BTA, 73); *Zādspram*, III.8 (ed. BTA, 19-20, lxxiii).

worship the glorious . . . star Tištrya . . . from whom, the lofty one, is fame; from Apąm Napāt is (his?) nature *(apąm nafəðrat hača čiθrəm)*."[134]

There are other Avestan passages which suggest, however, that the ancient Apąm Napāt was not only associated with the waters, but was once a very great god in the Iranian pantheon. He is in fact the only god other than Ahura Mazdā and Mithra who is ever hailed as "Ahura"; and he shares with the latter (with whom he parts the daylight hours) the Ahuric task of maintaining order in the world of men. The following striking verse concerning him occurs in *Yašt* 19 (a hymn dedicated to the Earth):[135] "We worship the high Lord, imperial,[136] majestic,[137] Son of the Waters, who has swift horses, the hero who gives help when called upon. (It is) he who created men, he who shaped men, the god amid the waters, who being prayed to is the swiftest of all to hear" *(bərəzantəm ahurəm xšaθrīm xšaētəm apąm napātəm aurvaṭ.aspəm yazamaide aršānəm zavanō. sum, yō nərāuš daδa, yō nərāuš tataša, yō upāpō yazatō sruṭ.gaošō.təmō asti yezimnō)*. The opening words of this verse, *bərəzantəm ahurəm*, the "high Lord", are used in all invocations of the "Son of the Waters"; and in Sasanian and present usage he is known accordingly simply as Burz or Burj, the "High One", which in one place is glossed as *Burz ī Ābānnāf*, "the High One, who is the Son of the Waters".[138] How old this usage is cannot be determined; but it suggests that Apąm Napāt was not in fact the Ahura's proper name, but simply another descriptive appellation, "Burj" being given preference to it in invoking him.

Another passage concerning the god occurs in *Yašt* 13 (the hymn to the *fravašis*). It runs as follows: "Mithra of wide pastures will further all ruling councils of the lands, and pacify (the lands) that are in turmoil. Henceforth the mighty Apąm Napāt will further all ruling councils of the lands, and restrain (the lands) that are in turmoil".[139] In this verse these two great Ahuras are thus seen acting together and as equals for the same end, namely to preserve order, *aša*, in human society. Similarly in *Yašt* 19 it is told how they strive to protect the divine Khvarənah or kingly Fortune, by which legitimate rule is maintained among the Iranians. When King

[134] *Yt.* 8.4.
[135] *Yt.* 19.52.
[136] The Pahlavi translators interpreted *khšathrīm*, the accusative of *khšathrya-*, as a form from *khšathrī-*"woman", and accordingly rendered *ahurəm khšathrīm* as *khwadāy ī mādagān* "lord of women" (see Bartholomae, *Air. Wb.* 548), a rendering on which a good deal of emphasis was put in earlier discussions of the nature of Apąm Napāt.
[137] On *khšaēta*, "prince, king", see most recently Benveniste, *Titres et noms propres*, 20-2.
[138] *Zādspram*, III.8.
[139] *Yt.* 13.95 (on which see Gershevitch, *AHM*, 27-8).

Yima allowed a "lying, untrue word" into his mind (v.34) the Fortune left him and passed into the guardianship of Mithra and fire, and thereafter into that of water (represented by the sea Vourukaša), whereupon Apąm Napāt seized it "at the bottom of profound bays" (v.51).[140] Thus the two Ahuras not only pursue the same goal, of keeping the Khvarənah safe from wicked possessors, but one does so, characteristically, in connection with fire, the other with water.[141]

The Pahlavi texts are in accord with the Avesta in presenting Apąm Napāt (as the *yazad* Burz) primarily as a water-god, who dwells amid the great mythical waters of the world; but they also celebrate him still as the god who watches over Khvarənah (Khwarrah). The following passage is the most comprehensive: "The abode of the *yazad* Burz is there where are Ardvīsūr and the undefiled Waters. And his chief duty is to distribute the water of the sea [Vourukaša] to all regions. This (task) too is *his, that he saves creatures from high surges in crossing the sea, and watches always over Khwarrah".[142] It is presumably because of his care for the Khvarənah or Fortune of the Iranian peoples that the following strange myth is told of him: "Every third year many from non-Iranian lands gather together upon the summit of Mount Harburz, in order to go into the Iranian lands to cause bringing of harm and destruction on the world. Then the *yazad* Burz comes up from the depths of the water Arang and arouses, upon the highest point of all that high mountain, the bird Čamrūš which pecks up all those from non-Iranian lands as a bird pecks up grain."[143] This quaint tale, for all its oddity, is basically in harmony with the general concept of Apąm Napāt as one who helps to maintain the Iranian realm and to ward off the forces of disruption.

This is virtually all that is said in the Zoroastrian tradition of the "Son of the Waters";[144] but limited though it is, it is certainly remarkable, and

[140] This narrative is interrupted in the existing redaction of the *yašt* by irrelevant verses (vv. 36-46), which plainly represent elaborations of the original text through its long oral transmission. Thus in vv. 36, 37 one has the logical absurdity (through the almost inevitable Zoroastrian triplication) of Khvarənah leaving Yima for a second and a third time; and this extension gave the poets scope to introduce first Thraētaona, the hero who is regularly associated with Mithra, and then all the other heroes who usually follow Thraētaona. V.46 is specifically Zoroastrian.
[141] The interpolation of extraneous verses has brought it about that Mithra is now separated by vv. 36-46 from fire, and the parallelism with his brother Ahura and water is thus obscured.
[142] *GBd.* XXVI. 91 (ed. TDA, 174-5; transl. BTA, 227). On this passage see Bailey, *TPS* 1956, 89.
[143] *GBd.* XXIV.24 (ed. TDA, 153-4, transl. BTA, 197-9). On Harburz and Arang see further in Ch. 5, below.
[144] The older theory that Apąm Napāt appears as Npāt or Nbāt in Armenia and among the Mandaeans (see J. Markwart, *Wehrot und Arang*, Leiden 1938, 128; Gray, *Foundations*, 134) must be abandoned, see K. Rudolf, *Die Mandäer* I, Göttingen 1960, 61.

like the cultic facts it suggests that this divinity was a once great god who has become strangely overshadowed —for it hardly accords with the fitness of things that a minor deity should be hailed as Ahura, the creator of men and guardian of order, equal partner with mighty Mithra, and linked with water as his brother Ahura is with fire. Meagre though the material is in comparison with all that is said in the Vedas about Varuṇa, it nevertheless agrees essentially with it, and the concepts of the two Asuras, Mitra-Varuṇa, and the two Ahuras, Mithra-Apąm Napāt, seem strikingly the same: two equal gods sharing common tasks, moral deities who are nevertheless associated with the two vital elements of fire and water. Even the choice of words in the Avestan passage describing how they maintain social order seems significant; for whereas Mithra "will pacify" *(rāmayeiti)*, Apąm Napāt "will restrain" *(nyāsāite)*;[145] and to restrain or fetter wrong-doing is, as we have seen, a characteristic activity of Vedic Varuṇa's.[146]

On this evidence the identification of Avestan Apąm Napāt with Vedic Varuṇa might therefore seem straightforward; but there is the awkward fact to account for that the Vedas know two deities, Varuṇa *and* Apām Napāt, apparently distinct. The Vedic "Son of the Waters' is also a perplexing figure, however, in much the same ways as his Iranian counterpart. He too appears at first sight to be a minor divinity, and only one hymn is addressed to him in the Rigveda.[147] Yet in this he is celebrated in "magnificent terms",[148] notably where it is said: "Apām Napāt, the Master, has created all beings through his power as Asura" *(apā́m nápād asuríasya mahnā́ viśvāni aryó bhúvanā jajāna)*.[149] This has a striking resemblance to what is said in the fugitive verse in Apąm Napāt's honour in *Yašt* 19 (v.52) that he "created men . . . shaped men." The Vedic Apām Napāt is called the "urger on of horses" *(āśuheman-)*,[150] the Avestan one

[145] On *nyās-* see W. P. Schmid, *IF* LXII, 1956, 235-9, who derives the word from *yās-* "hold, take".

[146] On Varuṇa's activity as "fettering" through vows see most recently Thieme, *German Scholars in India* I, 343-4, 347. "The activity denoted by the term *kḷpti* 'orderly arrangement, accomplishment, adaptation to right or normal conditions' is as typical of Mitra as *vidhṛti* 'arrangement by suppression, checking or restraining' is of Varuṇa" (Gonda, *The Vedic god Mitra*, 97).

[147] *RV* 2.35.

[148] See A. Bergaigne, *La religion védique* II, 18.

[149] *RV* 2.35.2.

[150] See, e.g., *RV* 7.47.2. Professor Thieme (in a letter of April 1974) states, however, that in his opinion *āśuhéman* must rather be interpreted as a *bahuvrihi* "of quick start" (*hi*-meaning "set in motion, set oneself in motion"), which is used of horses themselves (*RV* 1.116.2). Possibly, he conjectures, the adjective may be applied to Apām Napāt because of his affinity, as water-god, with horses, or because, as master of the waves, he is himself "of quick start", rushing forth swiftly like the waters.

has the epithet "having swift horses". Both expressions seem proper to a god of the waters, who controls their waves like Greek Poseidon;[151] but in Vedic exegesis *āśuheman* is treated as one of the many names given to Agni "when regarded as Apām Napāt"; for in a number of Rigvedic passages the "Son of the Waters" is identified with the fire-god.[152] But this identification, for which there is no support on the Iranian side,[153] appears by no means straightforward or exclusive, and has been the subject of much debate among Vedic scholars. Thus there are other Rigvedic passages which equally clearly treat Apām Napāt and Agni as two distinct divinities, and yet others where Apām Napāt appears simply as a water-god, with no further link or identification.[154] These facts exist in conjunction with the problem of why a god of fire should be associated with waters, to the extent of deriving an appellation from them. To this the most detailed and penetrating answer is perhaps that given by H. Oldenberg.[155] This scholar rejected the idea that the principal link was that of lightning with the rain-cloud,[156] and sought it instead in the ancient association of plants with water. From plants come the sticks which, rubbed together, daily "give birth" to Agni. These plants are themselves "born" of water, and water is their being. "Water must therefore have been regarded as the latent power which breaks out as fire from the wood of plants. When thereafter the fire returns again to the sky as smoke, that is as cloud, the circle is completed which a Vedic verse describes clearly: 'The same water ascends and descends in the course of the day. The rain-gods refresh the

[151] On the horse as symbol of the water-god among the Iranians see Markwart, *Wehrot und Arang*, 88. In Avestan mythology the rain-god Tištrya takes the shape of a horse (see further below), and the river-goddess Arədvī drives four horses. In India Agni is associated in literature and cult with a horse (see, e.g., Oldenberg, *Rel.*, 75 ff.), possibly through his identification with Apām Napāt. On horse-sacrifice to the waters in Parthian times see Vol. II.

[152] See those passages in the index-volume to Geldner's translation of the Rigveda, prepared by J. Nobel, *Harvard Oriental Series*, Vol. 36, 36, which are listed under "Apām Napāt, eine besondere Form des Agni".

[153] Among earlier generations of Iranists there were some (e.g. C. de Harlez, *Avesta*, cvii, Darmesteter, *ZA* II, 630 n. 82), who assumed an "igneous nature" for the Iranian god also; but the arguments, deriving partly from the supposedly "fiery" character of the associated Khvarənah (see F. Windischmann, *Zor. Studien*, Berlin 1863, 185) seem insubstantial, and evolved to fit the Vedic material rather than deriving independently from the Iranian. Against them see the reasoned arguments of L. H. Gray, "The Indo-Iranian deity Apām Napāt" *ARW* III, 1900, 32-3, who based his rejection of the theory on a careful scrutiny of the relevant Avestan liturgical passages. The interpretation is nevertheless still advanced by some scholars (e.g. Widengren, *Die Religionen Irans*, 34-5), but with little attempt at justification.

[154] E.g. *RV* 7.47.

[155] *Die Religion des Vedas*, 108 ff.

[156] For this theory see especially H. W. Magoun, "Apām Napāt in the Ṛgveda", *JAOS* XIX, 1898, 137-44.

earth, fires refresh the sky' [*RV* 1.164.51]".[157] Further, the quenching of fire in water seemed evidently like an entering of fire into this element, and hence an abiding in it. In *RV* 1.65.9 it is said of Agni: "He hisses, sitting there, like a swan in the water".[158] As a result of these speculations on natural phenomena all water was regarded as holding fire within itself. Nevertheless this is only one aspect, and a relatively minor one, of the concept of Agni. Even with regard to this god's birth, he is said to be born also of plants and stones. He is further described as living in plants and stones, beasts and men (presumably because of animal warmth), and likewise in the earth, which is said to be pregnant with Agni (doubtless because plants and rocks themselves spring from the soil).[159] In the light of such general associations, the particular prominence given to the concept of Agni as "king amid the waters" *(apsú rájā)*[160] appears to need some special explanation, even beyond the speculation which brought together the two revered elements of water and fire; and this, Oldenberg suggested, was to be found in a contamination of Agni with an original Apām Napāt, an Indo-Iranian "water spirit" *(Wasserdämon)* originally wholly distinct from him.[161] Through this contamination the Vedic Apām Napāt acquired the mixed traits of a water-god and a fire-god, and Agni's connection with water was greatly emphasized and developed. In the ritual, however, the connection of Apām Napāt remained wholly with water, as does that of his Iranian namesake.[162]

Oldenberg's interpretation was accepted by Gray, who supported it with citations of the Avestan evidence for the character of Apąm Napāt;[163] but it was later tacitly abandoned by Gray himself[164] and seems thereafter to have been largely ignored.[165] It appears, however, to offer a satisfactory explanation for the anomalies in the Vedic conception of Apām Napāt; and only one modification seems necessary, and that is to substitute great Varuṇa, "Child of the Waters" *(apāṁ śiśur)*,[166] for the un-

[157] Oldenberg, op. cit., 113-4 (with translation of the Vedic verse according to Geldner).
[158] Translation according to Geldner; cited by Oldenberg, op. cit., 114.
[159] See Oldenberg, op. cit., 120. For references to the Vedic passages see the index volume to Geldner's translation, pp. 13-16.
[160] *RV* 10.45.5.
[161] Op. cit., 100-1, 117-9.
[162] See A. Hillebrandt, *Ritualliteratur*, 129; Keith, *Rel. and phil. I*, 135.
[163] *ARW* III, 1900, 18-51.
[164] See his *Foundations*, 133-6.
[165] Gonda, *Rel. Indiens* I, 69, suggested that the association of fire and water was that of a male principle (fire) and a female one, into which the male entered to be born from it; and so the water-spirit, Apām Napāt, came to be equated with the "Urform" of Agni. For a survey of yet other interpretations of Apām Napāt see Hillebrandt, *Vedische Mythologie* I, 349-57. (This scholar himself sought to identify the god with the moon.)
[166] *VS* 10.7 (see Lüders, *Varuṇa*, 50-1).

known "water-spirit" of Oldenberg's hypothesis. There are at least two Rigvedic verses which directly support this interpretation. Both occur in hymns concerned with the equation, so common in the Vedas, of Agni with other gods, equations which relate to his various stages of life or his manifold functions. In the first hymn it is said: "You, Agni, are Varuṇa when you are born. You are Mitra when kindled. In you, Son of Strength, are all gods" (*RV* 5.3.1). The first words imply that it is in the moment of being "born" that Agni is Varuṇa.[167] When from the "water" i.e. the wooden sticks, he passes into blazing fire, he "becomes" Mitra. In the other hymn the following verse occurs: "You become the eye and protector of great *ṛta*—you become Varuṇa, since you enter on behalf of *ṛta*. You become 'Son of the Waters', O Jātavedas" (*RV* 10.8.5). Here the names Varuṇa and Apām Napāt appear to be used in apposition within the verse as two terms representing the one god, with whom Agni is equated. That the identification of Agni with Apām Napāt is only occasional is further demonstrated by the fact that in at least one Rigvedic hymn the god Savitṛ is also called Apām Napāt.[168] This was because Savitṛ was linked with the sun, and the belief was that when the sun set it sank down into the seas that lie beneath the earth; and so it could be said: "When the [sun] sinks in the water, it becomes Varuṇa",[169] or, in other terms, Savitṛ becomes Apām Napāt. As Agni, daily born of water, daily "becomes Varuṇa", so Savitṛ, nightly descending into it, is in his turn identified with the god "dwelling in the water",[170] the mighty Asura.

One characteristic of a water-god which Varuṇa as Varuṇa retained for himself was the beneficent activity of dispensing rain.This, as we have seen, was also a characteristic function of the Iranian Apąm Napāt. Later development of the concept of Varuṇa appears to have been exclusively on these naturalistic lines. In post-Vedic India he became "God of the Water, God of the Sea, an Indian Neptune".[171] Similarly in Iran Apąm Napāt came to be invoked so largely in connection with the waters that Cumont identified him with the Oceanus of the Mithraic monuments.[172]

Although on the present evidence there seems no possibility of final

[167] On his subsequent identification with Mitra see Thieme, *Mitra and Aryaman*, 84.
[168] *RV* 1. 22.6; cf. 10.149.2 (where the vocative Apām Napāt may also be addressed to Savitṛ, if not to Varuṇa as Apām Napāt).
[169] *KB* 18.9 (see Lüders, *Varuṇa*, 46; Kuiper, *IIJ* VIII, 1964, 107 with n. 56).
[170] *Mbh.* I.225.1 (see Lüders, *Varuṇa*, 41). Lüders pressed the association of Varuṇa with the waters to the point where he explained the fact that he has his dwelling also in the heavens as due to the existence of "heavenly waters"; but against this see K. Hoffmann, *OLZ* XLIX 9/10, 1954, 389-95 and especially 394.
[171] Lüders, *Varuṇa*, I, 9.
[172] Cumont, *TMMM* I, 142.

proof, yet the Vedic and Avestan data taken together most strongly suggest that in Indo-Iranian times the name Apām Napāt, "Son of the Waters", was simply an appellation of Varuna, as lord of the oath; and this being so, it removes the only serious obstacle to regarding the Iranian Apąm Napāt as Ahura *Vouruna, worshipped by this ancient appellation. What makes this interpretation almost certain is that through it an identical structure is established in the relationships of the great "Lords" of the Vedic and Avestan pantheons, with similar functions being performed by each. In both the Lord Wisdom is the highest of the three gods, solitary and very powerful, and not, it seems, circumscribed through being associated with any natural phenomenon[173] or particular range of activity. His *māyā*, apparently, was strong enough to encompass all beneficent workings; and beneath him, fulfilling his behests, were the mighty pair of equal power, Mithra/Mitra and *Vouruna Apąm Napāt/Varuṇa Apām Napāt.

In Rigvedic times, it seems, Asura *Medhā had already begun to recede into neglect and oblivion, to be followed in due course by the other two Asuras; but the Zoroastrians venerate all three divinities still today, with relatively little change in the fundamental pattern of their concepts. *Vouruna appears, however, to have suffered a greater eclipse through Zoroaster's reform than did his brother Ahura, Mithra. It would be easy to suppose that this came about through Mithra having already in pagan times become the dominant one of the pair in Iran (through a development opposite to that which took place in India); but in fact there is evidence to suggest that *Vouruna had an exalted place in the ancient Iranian pantheon, not unlike that held by Varuṇa in India. Thus, although it is at first sight surprising, it seems that when the pagan Iranians spoke of "the Ahura" they meant not Ahura Mazdā, but *Vouruna. The evidence is as follows: Mazdā is seldom invoked without the title Ahura, and never, as far as can be established, as "Ahura" alone; even in Zoroaster's *Gāthās*, where title and name are still separate, the prophet never uses the proper name without the title following, at least within the same hymn;[174] and among the Persians the two elements had actually been fused by the 5th century B.C. to form a single name: A(h)uramazda. This occurs compounded with that of Mithra to form a man's proper name, attested both (it seems) in an Old Persian form preserved by Plutarch, Mesoromasdes,[175] and as Sasanian Mihrohrmazd.[176] There is another similar name, Māhohrmazd;[177] and it seems probable that both were ancient compounds, formed already in pagan times and continuing in use despite possible theological objections (for an old grammatical rule, that the shorter word always takes precedence in such a compound, meant that the name of the lesser god had necessarily to stand before that of Zoroaster's supreme Lord).[178]

[173] The association of Ohrmazd (Urmaysda) with the sun among the Khotanese Sakas and others (see above, p. 39 n. 115) remains a problem; but possibly the supreme Lord acquired locally some of the associations proper to Mithra as, in the Avesta, he seems to have acquired some of those proper to *Vouruna (see below, pp. 50-51).

[174] For a detailed study of the usages in the *Gāthās* see R. Kent, "The name Ahuramazda", *Oriental Studies in honour of C. E. Pavry*, 200-8.

It seems therefore that in pagan days Mazdā was so regularly spoken of and invoked with his own name and the title Ahura that these became fused together in time to form a single appellation. The only god who can be shown to have been addressed by the title Ahura alone is *Vouruna Apąm Napāt, who is regularly invoked as the "High Lord", *ahura-bərəzant-*. This fact, coupled with the position of Mithra and Apąm Napat as a pair, sharing the same functions and complementing one another, makes it almost certain that in the ancient *dvandva* compound *mithra ahura bərəzanta* "Mithra and the high Lord",[179] the Ahura is Apąm Napāt (an interpretation suggested long ago by Spiegel,[180] but without the further step of identifying Apąm Napāt as *Vouruna). In the light of this, since the proper name Ohrmazddāt exists in Middle Iranian,[181] meaning "Created by Ahuramazda", an *Ahuradāta should presumably be differently interpreted as "Created by the Ahura", i.e. by *Vouruna; but the one attestation of this name[182] has now been challenged.[183]

A well-attested adjective *ahuradāta* exists, which occurs qualifying two

[175] *Ad principem ineruditum* 3.780c (μεσορομασδης), see S. Wikander, "Mithra en vieux-perse", *Orientalia Suecana* I, 1952, 66-8; Kuiper, *IIJ* IV, 1960, 187-8. Wikander interpreted the word as a *dvandva* compound of Mithra, in the Old Persian form Missa, with Auramazda.

[176] See Justi, *Iranisches Namenbuch*, 216; A. D. H. Bivar, *Catalogue of the Western Asiatic seals in the British Museum, Stamp Seals* II, *The Sassanian dynasty*, London 1969, Pl. 9.1; and cf. the occurrence of the proper name MIθPACΩPOMACΔHC on a Roman tessera excavated at St. Albans in England, see H. Mattingley, *Numismatic Chronicle* XII, 1932, 54 ff.

[177] See Justi, op. cit., 187.

[178] On similar theophoric compounds where the lesser divinity's name stands first, even when of equal length, see Henning, *BSOAS* XXVIII, 1965, 250 *(Rašnumihr, Tīrmihr)*.

[179] *Yt.* 10.113, 145; *Ny.* 1.7. In the written Avesta the names appear separate, but as in Vedic usage each is inflected as a dual. On Avestan *dvandvas* see Duchesne-Guillemin, *Les composés de l'Avesta*, 44-9.

[180] See his *Die arische Periode und ihre Zustände*, Leipzig 1887, 187-8.

[181] Justi, op. cit., 10.

[182] See Benveniste, *Titres et noms propres*, 95.

[183] Professor W. Hinz, in a letter of July 1975, kindly informs me that the Elamite letters *ú-ir-da-ad-da* cannot represent A(h)uradāta, since *ú* always renders spoken *u*, not *au*.

nouns, *zam* "earth" and *vərəthraghna* "victory", a fact which has been much discussed.[184] In Zoroastrian theology Ahura Mazdā is the ultimate Creator of all things; and there is no doubt that in time the *Ahura* of this adjective came to be regarded as referring to him. The probability is, however, that originally *Vouruna was meant, whose Indian counterpart fulfils so many acts of creation; and this indeed is in all likelihood one of the reasons for his relative eclipse in Zoroastrianism—that when Zoroaster preached that Ahura Mazdā was the Creator of all things good, *Vouruna was robbed of one of his own characteristic functions, and being so bereft survived in the main with only the limited activity of God of the Waters;[185] whereas Mithra's roles of judge and overseer were little affected by the new doctrines, and so his position remained virtually unaltered. That one of the creative acts of the pagan *Vouruna was directly transferred in Zoroastrianism to Ahura Mazdā is actually indicated by the Avestan texts; for Windischmann has pointed out[186] how closely the words spoken of Apąm Napāt in the ancient *Yašt* 19 (v.52): "who created men, who shaped men" *(yō nərəuš daδa, yō nərəuš tataša)* are paralleled by those used of Ahura Mazdā in the more recent *Yasna* 1.1: "who created us, who shaped (us)" *(yō nō daδa, yō tataša)*. Probably, therefore, in pagan times "the Ahura", *Vouruna, was also hailed as creating the earth which the men formed by him trod upon, and victory by which the righteous could defend *aša*, his especial charge. The pagan Ahura Mazdā was probably more remote, like the Vedic Asura; and it may well be that the adjective *mazdadāta* "created by Mazdā" was a specifically Zoroastrian coinage, evolved to stress the creative activity of the supreme Lord, and used at first with deliberate doctrinal intent. Thus though Apąm Napāt is regularly invoked in the *yasna* with the water which was his ancient habitation, the water is always described there as *mazdadāta*, so that the invocation is of "the high Lord, Apąm Napāt, and Mazdā-created Water".[187] Elsewhere victory is called both by its ancient fixed epithet *ahuradāta* and also, as if with a gloss, *mazdadāta: vərəθraynəm ahuraδātəm bərō.xᵛarənō mazdaδātəm*.[188] It seems possible, too, that *mazdayasna*, "one whose worship is addressed to Mazdā"[189], was also a Zoroastrian coinage, for it and *mazdadāta* are the only words in common use which depart from what seems the traditional practice of regularly referring to Mazdā with the honorific "Ahura" before his name.

A place in the Avesta where it seems possible to trace the actual transference of worship from "the Ahura", i.e. *Vouruna, to Ahura Mazdā is the *Yasna Haptaŋhāiti*. It is generally agreed that this ancient text in the Gathic dialect is remarkably archaic in character, and has been only partially adapted to Zoroastrianism.[190] It is made up of different elements, mostly in prose, which formed, it seems, a short liturgy accompanying the offerings to fire and water. In its extant form it is explicitly devoted to Ahura Mazdā, but it is very possible that this is the result of revision, and that originally it was the two lesser Ahuras who were invoked, as the Lords of water and fire. Despite rehandling, some strikingly pagan touches remain. Thus Ahura Mazdā is addressed as one who is "harm to him whom you may destine for harm" *(axtiš ahmāi yəm axtōyōi dåŋhē)*[191]—words appropriate to either Mithra or *Vouruna, stern administrators of the right, but discordant with the character of Ahura Mazdā as preached by Zoroaster. He is likewise said to be *humāyi*, "possessed of good *māyā*".[192] Even more strikingly, the Waters are called "the Ahura's wives", *ahurānī*,[193] a concept which is paralleled in the Rigveda by the idea that the Waters are the "wives" of Varuṇa. But there they are called *varuṇānī*,[194] which is yet another piece of evidence to show that in pagan Iran "the Ahura" meant *Vouruna only. Nowhere else but in the *Yasna Haptaŋhāiti* are his particular attributes as god of the Waters thus transferred to the supreme deity.

Why it should have been that in India Asura *Medhā seems to have lost his proper name, becoming simply "the Asura", whereas in Iran this befell *Vouruna instead, remains obscure. The usage certainly contrasts with custom in the worship of Mithra/Mitra, for it is an explicit cultic requirement that this divinity must be addressed by his own name, if devotion to him is to be effective;[195] and in this again the Iranian Mithra was

[184] Benveniste, *Vṛtra et Vṛθragna*, 47-8 saw in *ahuradāta* a direct ancient opposition to *daēvadāta*. In *AHM*, 50 Gershevitch interpreted the compound as containing "a fossilized reference to the discarded Iranian *Vouruna", but later (*JNES* XXIII, 1964, 12 n. 1) he revised this, interpreting the Ahura here as the Vedic "Asura", i.e. "an Indo-Iranian god whose name was Asura without further qualification".

[185] This point (of being robbed of an earlier creative function) was made concerning Apąm Napāt by de Harlez, *Avesta*, cvii.

[186] *Zor. Studien*, 180.

[187] *Y.* 1.5 et pass.

[188] *Vd.* 19.37, cited in this connection by Benveniste, *Vṛtra et Vṛθragna*, 49.

[189] See Benveniste, "Le terme iranien *mazdayasna*", *BSOAS* XXXIII, 1970, 5-9.

[190] See J. and Th. Baunack, *Studien auf dem griechischen und der arischen Sprachen*, I, Leipzig 1886, 328-454; O. G. von Wesendonk, *Die religionsgeschichtliche Bedeutung des Yasna Haptaŋhāti*, Bonn und Köln, 1931; Nyberg, *Rel.*, 275 ff.; Zaehner, *Dawn*, Ch. 2.

[191] *Y.* 36.1.

[192] *Y.* 41.3.

[193] *Y.* 38.3.

[194] See *RV* 2.32.8; 7.34.22.

[195] See *Yt.* 10.54-5; and on the Vedic Mitra apud Thieme, *Mitra and Aryaman*, 59. In Zoroastrian usage Mithra is called upon as *aokhtō.nāmanəm yazatəm* "the god of spoken name" (*Sirōza* 1.16).

fortunate, for the fact that *Vouruna was regularly addressed simply as "Ahura" must have made it easier for Zoroastrian theologians gradually to annex much of his cult to Ahura Mazdā. Later the popularity of the river-goddess Arədvī Sūrā (probably due in part to her assimilation under the Achaemenians to an alien mother-goddess) seems to have driven him even as water-god still further into the background, so that although in the *yasna* it is always he who is invoked with "Mazdā-created Water", the specific prayer to the Waters, the *Ābān Niyāyeš*, came to consist almost entirely of verses from Ardvīsūr's *yašt*, and the great Ahura was no longer even mentioned there. Nevertheless, it was his part in the cult which ensured *Vouruna Apąm Napāt lasting worship by Zoroastrians. It is, moreover, probably cultic facts which brought it about that when he and Mithra are spoken of together (as in the ancient *yašt* passages) it is always Mithra who stands first, for as protector of the morning watch he is regularly invoked in the liturgies before his brother Ahura, who follows him in guarding the hours after noon; and this must have set the regular pattern of their relationship. The diversity in *Vouruna's invocation, as "Son of the Waters" and "high Lord", together with a fairly general indifference on the part of Western scholars to Zoroastrian devotional life, have combined to obscure the fact of this relationship for alien inquirers.

In pagan times the great triad of Asuras represented, it seems, as a group the chief moral deities of the Indo-Iranians. In the case of each the ethical aspect "is decidedly prevalent and makes up the personality and typical character of the god".[196] The dignity and worth of the basic conceptions is indeed so striking that formerly some scholars felt that they were not in harmony with the apparently more primitive character of many Iranian and Vedic gods. Unsuccessful attempts were accordingly made to derive these particular deities from some alien culture, such as that of Babylon; but their Indo-Iranian origin may be held by now to be firmly established. It has been plausibly suggested that their concept and worship evolved during the time when the Indians and Iranians, still living together as one community, under kings and possibly a high king,[197] came to reflect more deeply upon rule and rulership, upon social and cosmic order. "The old inherited sense of a general unity, of a certain regularity in the universe, led so to speak to the concept of a set of divine laws which were under the protection of the divine rulers, just as earthly princes protected the laws which prevailed in their realms . . . Despite his

[196] A. J. Carnoy, "The moral deities of Iran and India and their origins", *American Journal of Theology* XXI, 1917, 69.
[197] See above, pp. 4-5.

position of authority, the king was bound to his own undertakings and duties; and with the transference of this state of affairs to the cosmos, the eternal law [*ṛta*] came to be conceived almost as primary".[198] The nature of the great moral Asuras "indicates necessarily a society whose constitution and laws were no longer at an entirely primitive level. The beliefs which attach to them may of course have deeper roots in an older social system, but their development bears the imprint of the further evolution of the Indo-Iranian state".[199] This development has been further defined in the following words: "In place of the old feeling of helpless dependence on natural forces it was ever increasingly the human, social and political conditions of life which furnished the prototype for the concept of dependence on higher powers; dependence on the king, on the strong warrior, on the wise priest, on the man of wealth. So instead of divinised natural phenomena there appeared [in the case of Indra] the form of the godlike hero or benefactor . . ., in the case of Mitra and Varuṇa those of godlike kings and judges".[200]

There can be no doubt that the heroic Indra belongs, like the three Asuras, to the common Indo-Iranian pantheon, for he appears among the *daēvas* in Zoroastrian tradition, that is, he was among the divine beings rejected by Zoroaster as false gods. Even in the Vedas, where Indra and Varuṇa both rule as universal kings, the opposition between them is recognised, their characters being wholly different. Both are regal; but whereas Varuṇa rules by laws, to which he demands obedience from gods and men, Indra owes his power to his own overwhelming might. He is a fighter, wielder of the thunderbolt, nurtured on the intoxicating *soma*, hero of many myths, violent, lavish, reckless, sensual. He is held to embody the type of the Indo-Iranian warrior, mighty in combat and in his potations, and generous to his followers with the booty gained in battle—even as Indra is held to be most bountiful to his worshippers, although demanding from them in turn ample offerings, for it is these rather than ethical actions which secure his favour. The contrast between him and Varuṇa is strikingly expressed in a Rigvedic hymn in which the two gods state in turn their different claims to greatness.[201] Varuṇa declares: "Lordship belongs indeed to me, the perpetual sovereign, as all the Im-

[198] See Konow, *Die Inder*, 18, 19.
[199] *Ibid.*, 21.
[200] Oldenberg, *Rel.*, 48. This interpretation is rejected by those who, like Kuiper (*IIJ* VIII, 1964, 106 ff.) see Varuṇa as god of the primeval waters, and accordingly immeasurably ancient.
[201] *RV* 4.42 (following Geldner's translation).

mortals (acknowledge) to us. The gods obey Varuṇa's will . . . I, Varuṇa, am king; first for me were appointed the dignities of Asura . . . I let the dripping waters rise up, through *ṛta* I uphold the sky. By *ṛta* is the son of Aditi the lord who rules through *ṛta*". Indra in his turn declares: "Men who ride swiftly, having good horses, call on me when surrounded in battle. I provoke strife, I the bountiful Indra. I whirl up the dust, my strength is overwhelming. All things have I done. No godlike power can check me, the unassailable. When draughts of *soma*, when songs have made me drunk, then both the unbounded regions grow afraid". To this Varuṇa replies serenely: "All creatures know this of you . . .". There is no trace here of hostility between the two gods, only a calm statement of their differences—the differences between an ethical ruler concerned to maintain right and order, and a bold warrior-chief, as amoral as an elemental force.[202] For the Indians, it seems, Indra as the all-conqueror usurped the place of the Indo-Iranian god of Victory,[203] known to the "Avestan" people as "Ahura-created Vərəthraghna", and became the great champion against demons; whereas among the Iranians Victory retained his ancient place, and Indra was regarded (by Zoroaster at least) not merely as amoral but actively wicked, one who, in the words of the Rigvedic hymn, provoked strife, whirling up the dust.

It is in place of Vərəthraghna, it is suggested, that Indra appears after Mitra and Varuṇa as one of the divine protectors of the Mitanni treaty;[204] and there he is followed by Nāsatya, who in Zoroastrianism, as Nåŋhaithya, sinks with Indra to the ranks of demons. In the Vedas a *dvaṅdva*-compound occurs, Indra-Nāsatya;[205] and in the *Vendidād* these two beings are repudiated together as *Indrəm. . .Nåŋhaithīm*.[206] Between their names comes that of Saurva, the Indian Śarva, who is not mentioned in the Rigveda, but appears in later texts as equivalent of the violent and wicked Rudra.[207] In the Zoroastrian tradition he is known as "the chief of *dēvs* . . . (who) works tyranny and violence, lawlessness and oppression."[208] The concept of Nāsatya seems to have undergone considerable development in India,[209] and there is no Iranian material to help establish the

[202] For an admirable exposition of Indra's character in detail see Lommel, *Der arische Kriegsgott*, Frankfurt 1939.
[203] See Thieme, *JAOS* LXXX, 1960, 311-14, and further below.
[204] See Thieme, ibid.
[205] *RV* 8.26.8, cited by Thieme, art. cit., 315.
[206] *Vd.* 10.9.
[207] See Thieme, loc. cit.
[208] *GBd.* XXVII.7 (BTA, 235). For other references to Saurva in the Avesta and Pahlavi texts see Gray, *Foundations*, 182.
[209] Thus although the Rigveda knows a single Nāsatya (see Thieme, ibid.), the common

ancient character of this god; but there was evidently an old link between him and Indra, and probably one also between him and Śarva (for Nāsatya and Rudra are associated in the Rigveda).[210] These three are the only divinities worshipped in India—and evidently also in pagan Iran—who are abjured by name as evil beings in Zoroastrianism, because, it seems, of an amoral and violent element in their characters.[211]

In the verses quoted above from the Rigveda Varuṇa refers to himself as "the son of Aditi". There is a group of lesser divinities associated in the Vedas with Mitra and Varuṇa, who with them are known collectively as the "sons of Aditi" or the "Ādityas". Originally, it is thought, the phrase may have meant something like the "sons of freedom" or of "guiltlessness",[212] but in course of time the Indian myth-makers evolved from it a goddess Aditi. The gods who make up the Ādityas are nowhere systematically listed, and their number varies in different texts, being given as six, seven, eight and in later sources even twelve. In general the lesser Ādityas are, like Mitra and Varuṇa themselves, the personifications of abstracts; and two of the most prominent among them, Aryaman and Bhaga, likewise have Avestan counterparts, Airyaman and Baga, who also seem to have had a close association with the Iranian Ahuras.

The Vedic Aryaman is particularly linked with Mitra, and indeed twice appears in a *dvandva* compound with him, as Mitra-Aryaman.[213] A neuter noun, *aryaman*, exists in the Rigveda meaning, it seems, "hospitality", or "friendship towards a guest", together with a masculine one signifying "friend to a guest", or "friend" in general.[214] In the *Gāthās* the parallel *airyaman* occurs as a synonym of *haši* (Sanskrit *sakhi-*, Lat. *socius*) "com-

concept is of twin gods, invoked also as the Aśvins (the "Horsemen"). This appears to be solely an Indian development, see Konow, *The Aryan gods of the Mitani people, Kristiania Etnografiske Museums Skrifter*, 3/1, Kristiania 1921, 37, Thieme, loc. cit.
[210] *RV* 4.3.6., cited by Thieme, loc. cit.
[211] It is difficult, in the light of the prophet's spiritual and ethical preoccupations, to follow Burrow (*JRAS* 1973, 128-31) in thinking that the Avestan word *daēva* was a loanword from the Proto-Indoaryan spoken by migrants who had entered Iran before the Iranians, and that in condemning the *daēvas* Zoroaster was therefore merely condemning the alien gods, the *devas*, of another people.
[212] See A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, Strassburg 1897, 122; Keith, *Religion and philosophy*, 217. Otherwise J. Przyluski, *Le Muséon* XLIX, 1936, 292-310; *Eranos-Jahrbuch* 1938, 11-57; H. W. Bailey in *Anjali, Felicitation Vol. presented to O. H. de A. Wijesekers*, ed. J. Tilakasiri, University of Ceylon, 1970, 75-6, and in *Mithraic Studies* I, 5-6 (who suggests that the term Ādityas meant "sons of the House", and sees in all the members of this group divinities corresponding to the members of a princely human household).
[213] *RV* 5.67.1, 8.26.11; see Thieme, *Der Fremdling im Rgveda, Ab. f. die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, XXIII/2, Leipzig 1938, 143; *Mitra and Aryaman*, 12.
[214] Thieme, *Fremdling*, 134-41; *Mitra and Aryaman*, 72 ff. Dumézil sought instead for the latter word a meaning "protector of *Aryan* men", which he defended against Thieme's interpretation in *JA* 1958, 67-84.

panion, friend".[215] With reference to a social group this word seems to describe the members of the tribe or district—a larger community, that is, than the family or village,[216] comprising those with whom one stands in a friendly relationship established through hospitality exchanged, or from whom hospitality may properly be looked for.[217] The basic concepts of loyalty to an obligation formally entered into, and loyalty to the especial obligations between host and guest, are plainly close. "As protector of the contract Mitra can also be considered as protector of friendship to a guest. He coincides then to a certain extent with Aryaman. More exactly: Aryaman can be thought of as a separate hypostasis of Mitra's".[218] The lesser god never became associated with any natural phenomenon, and no myths attached to his name; but in the later Veda he is to be found decked out with traits borrowed from Indra, in order to enrich his concept as he is summoned to the sacrifice.[219]

Airyaman is by no means prominent in the Avesta; but one of the great prayers of Zoroastrianism, composed in the Gathic dialect, is an invocation of him as "Desirable Airyaman" (called from its first words the *Airyəmā išyō*). This prayer has its place in the *yasna*,[220] and is exalted in *Yašt* 3 as the greatest of *mąthras* against sickness.[221] It has been so used down the centuries, for Airyaman, perhaps as the "friend" of humanity, is held to be able to heal any of the 99,999 illnesses which can plague mankind.[222] His prayer forms part also of the Zoroastrian wedding ceremony, when guests are entertained in friendship and hospitality. Similarly in the Rigveda Aryaman is invoked for the welcome which a suitor hopes to receive at his bride's house, a bride at her new home.[223] The Iranian Airyaman plays a part also, according to Zoroastrian doctrine, in the future restoration of the world. The Saošyants, the Saviours, will themselves recite the *Airyəmā išyō*,[224] presumably to invoke the divinity's help in their great task of healing the world from evil; and it is he who, with Ātar, will melt the metal for the last great ordeal to separate the guilty

[215] See Benveniste, *Les mages dans l'ancient Iran*, 10-11. Thieme holds that in Indian tradition three kinds of friend are to be distinguished: *mitrá* "friend by covenant"; *aryamán* "friend by hospitality"; and *sákhā* "friend by liking" (op. cit., 104 ff.).

[216] See Benveniste, "Les classes sociales dans la tradition avestique", *JA* 1932, 121-30.

[217] Thieme, *Mitra and Aryaman*, 78.

[218] Thieme, *Fremdling*, 143.

[219] Ibid., 107-9, 121-3. On Aryaman's connection with the sun see Thieme, *Mitra and Aryaman*, 87-91.

[220] *Y.* 54.1.

[221] For the Avestan eulogy of this prayer see Darmesteter, *ZA* III, 4-5.

[222] See *Vd.* XXII.

[223] See Thieme, *Fremdling*, 123-9.

[224] See the Avestan fragment apud Darmesteter, loc. cit., and below, p. 261.

and innocent on Judgment Day.[225] In this there may be a trace of the old link between Airyaman and Mithra, for such an ordeal properly belongs, as we have seen, to Mithra, Judge of Creation and Lord of Fire. The popularity of Airyaman's cult never waned in Iran, and when in the 3rd century A.C. Manichaean missionaries translated their own scriptures into Persian, the divinity with whom they identified Jesus, the saviour and physician of souls, was Aryaman, the friend and healer, so that they presented him to the Iranians as Aryaman Yišō[226] (being perhaps influenced also in this by the rough word-play on *Yišō* and *išyō*).

With Vedic Aryaman is invoked another of the Ādityas, Bhaga, the personification, it seems, of prosperity and happiness.[227] The common noun *bhaga* means "portion, share", i.e. of the good things of this world, hence "luck". Bhaga, like Aryaman, is associated with marriage, and this has been explained on the grounds that in ancient communities marriages were primarily made so that prosperity should come through children to help in the work, thus bringing incidentally happiness.[228] Marriage in old societies was also commonly arranged as a means of establishing or strengthening friendship between families or groups, and has a strong contractual element. (As we have seen, the *mithra* between husband and wife is explicitly mentioned in the Avesta.[229]) Bhaga is therefore also associated with Mitra, and has a social and to some extent a moral character. His Iranian counterpart, Baga, does not appear anywhere in the Avesta; but he is frequently honoured in early Old Persian nomenclature,[230] which appears still to reflect the usages of Iranian paganism. Baga and Mithra are moreover set together in the Eastern Iranian proper name *Bagamihr (attested as Vakamihira at Mathurā[231]); and in a Sogdian wedding contract the bridegroom is required to swear a solemn oath "by Baga and by Mithra".[232] The Sogdian word for wedding itself, *Baghānī-*

[225] See below, Ch. 9.

[226] In M 17 V 9-10, see C. Salemann, *Manichaeische Studien* I, *Mémoires de l'Académie Impériale des Sciences de St.-Pétersbourg*, VIIIe Série, Vol. VIII.10, 1908, p. 8. (Aryaman was the Persian form of the god's name, against Av. Airyaman.)

[227] On this divinity see H. Oldenberg, *Nachrichten der Göttinger Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften*, 1915, 361-72.

[228] See Thieme, op. cit., 124 n. 1.

[229] *Yt.* 10.116.

[230] See Benveniste, *Titres et noms propres*, 79-80, 97-8; Gershevitch, *Studia .. A. Pagliaro oblata* II, 215-7.

[231] See H. Lüders, *Mathurā inscriptions*, ed. K. L. Janert, 1961, 95; cited by Henning, *BSOAS* XXVIII, 1965, 250, who points out that (presumably as the shorter one) it is the lesser god's name which stands first in the compound.

[232] See Henning, art. cit., 248. Duchesne-Guillemin, *Festschrift W. Eilers*, 1967, 157-8, suggested that in Sogdia Baga might have taken over Airyaman's functions in connection with marriage; but the Indian evidence makes it likely that these were shared of old between the two gods.

špəktē, means literally, it has been suggested, "Baga-union", a union presided over by this god.[233] Moreover, the autumn feast dedicated in Western Iran to Mithra, the Mithrakāna, seems to have been celebrated in Baga's honour in the east, as the *Bagakāna.[234] Since Baga thus appears to have been much reverenced by the pagan Iranians, his absence from the Zoroastrian pantheon is perplexing, the more so since he seems to have been closely linked to the Ahuric Mithra, as the Vedic Bhaga was to Mitra. It seems just possible, however, that the identity of his name with the common noun *baga*, used generally to designate the pagan Iranian gods, may have brought about his eclipse within Zoroastrianism—that he was an incidental victim of the prophet's struggle to end the worship of all divine beings indiscriminately.

Among the lesser Ādityas of the Veda are Amśa "Share" and Dakṣa "Dexterity". A host of such minor divinities, the personifications of abstracts, appear in the religious literatures of the Indians and Iranians, some of them ethical in character, others (like Amśa and Dakṣa) representing qualities or things which are morally neutral. Only a few of these beings are found in both traditions, which shows that the deification of such concepts continued as part of the living religious tradition of both peoples, long after their ways had separated. The religious intent behind such personifications appears to have been to obtain through the god thus worshipped the thing which he represented—whether this was the noble virtue of loyalty or the practical attainment of skill. The multiplication of minor gods may have been stimulated moreover by the fact that, as we have seen, Indo-Iranian deities are never invoked alone, but always in association. This must have encouraged the invocation with a great god of lesser, supporting divinities who might represent some aspect of his own character or personify some quality or thing within his gift. Thus in the archaic *Yasna Haptaŋhāiti* (in a section probably originally devoted, as we have seen, largely to *Vouruna) the Ahura is invoked not only with the Waters, his "wives", but also with a group of divinities who appear, with the fructifying waters, to represent the sustaining, fecund aspect of creation.[235] They are Aši (Reward), Iš (Prosperity),[236] Āzūiti (Fatness or Plenty)[237] Frasasti (Satisfaction)[238] and Pārəndi (Nourishment).[239]

[233] Henning, art. cit., 247.
[234] See ibid., 250, with references.
[235] On this section of *YHapt.* see H. W. Bailey, *BSOAS* XX, 1957, 44-5; J. Narten, "Vedisch aghnyā und die Wasser", *Acta Orientalia Neerlandica*, 1970, 120-34.
[236] See T. Burrow, *BSOAS* XVII, 1955, 326-45, and in particular 343 ff.; H. Humbach, *IF* LXIII, 1957, 44-7.
[237] See Humbach, art. cit., 50-1.
[238] See Bailey, *TPS* 1960, 83 n. 1.
[239] See ibid., 83-6, with the intro. to the 2nd ed. of *Zor. Problems* xxx-xxxi.

Several of the words thus personified have, as well as their general meanings, particular associations with sacrifice and worship. Of these five beings only the last named, who is familiar also from the Younger Avesta,[240] appears likewise in the Vedas, as the goddess Puraṁdhi; and only the first, Aši (who is capable of moral development) is invoked by Zoroaster in the *Gāthās*.[241] There, however, the prophet is most deeply concerned with Ahura Mazdā himself and the divine beings of his own revelation; and it is rather in the *Mihr Yašt* that those gods appear who may be supposed to have had links with the Ahuras in pagan times. Few of these, however, have Vedic counterparts, and it is therefore not certain that all are pre-Zoroastrian. In place of the lesser Ādityas of India a group of other "abstract" deities stand close to Iranian Mithra. One who is still of great importance in Zoroastrianism is the goddess Arštāt "Justice"[242]—a fitting companion to the protector of covenants. She is frequently invoked in the Zoroastrian liturgy with Mithra and with Rašnu, the "Judge", who appears to be the hypostasis of the idea embodied in the common noun *rašnu* "judging, one who judges".[243] His name is linked with Mithra's in the Sogdian proper name "Rašnumitr" *(ršnwmtr)*;[244] and he is honoured in Old Persian nomenclature of the turn of the 6th/5th centuries B.C.,[245] at a time when Zoroastrian influences are not clearly apparent in the giving of names in Pars. It is probable, therefore, that Rašnu was a deity of the pagan period, who evolved in association with Mithra's cult. With Arštāt he represents the Ahura's judicial aspect. Mithra's warlike one appears embodied in another of his associates, Hąm.varəti, "Valour"[246], whose name is perhaps also to be found among Old Persian proper names at an early date;[247] and his connection with the sun on its daily course brings into Mithra's entourage Thwāša, the divinised "Firmament".[248] Since these divine beings are all honoured with Mithra in his own *yašt*, their association may well be old. It is noteworthy that it forms a pattern not unlike that of the relation of the six great Aməša Spəntas of Zoroastrianism with Ahura Mazdā, in that these lesser gods are divinised aspects of Mithra's own being, or personify phenomena associated with him, and yet at the

[240] For references see Gray, *Foundations*, 155-56.
[241] See below, pp. 225-26.
[242] See Gershevitch, *AHM*, 286-7.
[243] Ibid., 223.
[244] I. M. Diakonov and V. A. Livshitz, *Dokumenti iz Nisi*, 1960, 24; see Henning, "A Sogdian god", *BSOAS* XXVIII, 1965, 250.
[245] See Benveniste, *Titres et noms propres*, 91 (**Rašnudāta* and **Rašnuka*).
[246] See Gershevitch, *AHM*, 162.
[247] See Benveniste, op. cit., 90 (*Nariyamartiš* for **Nairyā Hąm.varəti* "Manly Valour"?).
[248] See Zaehner, *Zurvan*, 89; Gershevitch, *AHM*, 215.

same time are independent deities, to be hailed and worshipped in their own right.

In the Zoroastrian liturgy Mithra is regularly invoked with Rāman khvāštra "Peace possessing good pasture". Darmesteter pointed out[249] that this being is probably a late hypostasis of what is spoken of in *Yasna Haptaŋhāiti* as *rāmāčā vāstrəmčā* "peace and pasture",[250] an expression conveying the idea of quiet thriving, of peace with security; and he suggested that the divinity thus evolved was brought into close connection with Mithra because Mithra himself, invoked as "of wide pastures", was besought for these things by his worshippers.[251] If, as thus seems likely, the concept of Rāman developed after Zoroaster taught, this divinity should not properly be considered here. Let us turn therefore to another of Mithra's close companions who is named in his own *yašt*, the great Sraoša. Sraoša is also regularly linked with Aši, and like her he is mentioned in the *Gāthās*. Once more a precise definition of the god's name probably eludes us. The word is evidently derived, by *s*-extension, from the verbal root *sru* "hear"; and as a common noun it appears to mean the act of hearkening *to*, that is, "obedience". This rendering fits the Gathic passages where the word occurs. But there are derivatives of *sraoša* which suggest that it could also bear the sense of "discipline".[252] Both obedience and discipline are soldierly virtues, which might in itself help to explain Sraoša's closeness to the warrior-god Mithra, from whom in fact he borrows many traits.[253] Yet the word *sraoša* also appears, like the related *sraothra* "recitation",[254] to have a connection with something said. One of the characteristic epithets of the god Sraoša is *tanu.mąthra* "having the sacred word for body";[255] and in Zoroastrianism he is outstandingly the god of prayer, and strong therefore to protect against the powers of evil. In the Avesta he is the only divinity to have two hymns in his honour[256]; and subsequently he became the only Zoroastrian divine being to be honoured in Muslim Persia, where he is known as Sarōš, the angel who carries messages between God and men. In the Zoroastrian texts he is at times associated with Nairyō.saŋha, another divinity of prayer, whose name ap-

[249] *Ét. iran.* II, 188-94.
[250] *Y.* 35.4; cf. *Y.*47.3.
[251] Op. cit., 193-4; followed by Gray, *Foundations*, 157, Gershevitch, *AHM*, 299. On Rāman's association with Vayu see further below, pp. 80-81.
[252] See Bartholomae, *Air. Wb.* 1635, bottom; Benveniste, *RHR* CXXX, 1945, 13-4; *JA* 1954, 304.
[253] See Geiger, *Die Aməša Spəntas*, 109-11.
[254] Bartholomae, *Air. Wb.* 1633.
[255] On this epithet see Gershevitch, *AHM*, 180-1.
[256] *Y.* 57 and *Yt.* 11.

pears to mean "of manly utterance" (cf. Vedic *narāśaṁsa*).[257] It occurs also, as Narišanka, in early Old Persian nomenclature.[258] Nairyō.saŋha has a curious epithet, peculiar to himself, of *khšathrō.naptar* "son of the kingdom"; and he is on occasion associated with both Mithra and *Vouruna Apąm Napāt, the upholders of human society. His chief links are, however, with fire, before which men's prayers were said, and with Sraoša himself. Another of his Avestan epithets is *huraodha* "of lovely form"; and in later literature certain myths attach to him, which celebrate his beauty. No original myths are told of Sraoša, and this is one reason why he has been held not to have been worshipped before Zoroaster. But, as we have seen, in India the "old" god Aryaman also lacks myths, and borrows picturesque traits when needed from other divinities, so that this is not a cogent argument against the antiquity of a concept. A striking parallel to Sraoša is furnished by the Vedic Bṛhaspati, "Lord of Prayer", who derives a number of epithets and traits from the warrior-god Indra.[259] As has been observed in his respect: "Prayers and magic formulas are, together with the power of weapons, mighty disposers of battles; the priest accompanied the royal commander in the field. So there appears beside Indra, the heroic god of battles, Bṛhaspati, as priestly god of battles".[260] Bṛhaspati is shown in this character in the following verse (*RV*10.103.4): "Fly around in your chariot, O Bṛhaspati, slaying the hostile, driving off enemies, shattering the host, crushing, victorious in battle, be you the helper of our chariots".[261] Prominent among the epithets of the Iranian Sraoša are "victorious" *(vanaitivant-, vərəthrajan-)*, "strong of arm" *(bāzuš.aojah-)*, "with mighty club" *(darši.dru-)*. Like Bṛhaspati he drives his chariot to help against foes (*Y.*57.27-9); and he is called "heroic, swift, strong, mighty" (*Y.*57.11), the one "who returns victorious from every battle", who gives protection from "the armies of the wicked who bear the banner of blood" (*Y.*57.12,25). It is probably, therefore, as god of prayer that Sraoša in his turn is so closely linked with the warrior-god Mithra. Bṛhaspati is worshipped as the "father of the gods" (*RV*2.26.3); and Zoroaster himself, using presumably traditional terminology, calls

[257] On this divinity see, with references, Gray, *Foundations*, 152-4; and further Gershevitch, *AHM*, 205-6. For another analysis of his name, as the "announcer on behalf of the skilled ones (men)", see H. W. Bailey in *Mithraic Studies* I, ed. Hinnells, 4.
[258] See Benveniste, *Titres et noms propres*, 89-90; and on the form of the OP name Gershevitch, *Studia .. A. Pagliaro oblata*, II 212-4.
[259] On this deity see the monograph by H.-P. Schmidt, *Bṛhaspati, Untersuchungen zur vedischen Mythologie und Kulturgeschichte*, Wiesbaden 1968.
[260] Oldenberg, *Religion*, 65-6.
[261] According to Geldner's translation. (Cited in an earlier rendering by Oldenberg, op. cit., 66.)

Sraoša "greatest of all" *(vīspə̄.mazištəm, Y.33.5)*. Bṛhaspati is, however, a purely Indian divinity, Sraoša a purely Iranian one; and although their development is in many respects parallel, there is nothing to show how ancient is the worship of each.

Another of Mithra's divine companions is the goddess Čistā, who is celebrated in the 16th *yašt*, and who evidently derives her name from the passive participle of a verb *kaet-* "teach, instruct".[262] She is goddess of the way, the one instructed in the paths to be followed, in both the sense of the physical roads which man traverses and that of the paths of true belief.[263] Among her epithets are "having good ways" *(hupathmanyā-)*, "having good paths" *(hvāyaonā-)*, "running well" *(huaiwitačinā-)* and "very straight" *(razištā-)*. "Čistā also gives the quality of *ākhšta-* which appears to blend with the energy of health. She does not merely guide; she inspires with the power to continue on the way",[264] and is thus an admirable companion to the god of loyalty.

Čistā has no prominence in later Zoroastrianism, where she has yielded her functions to two other divinities. One is Daēnā "Religion", who may be a purely Zoroastrian hypostasis (like the pale figure of Čisti "Doctrine", who has a minor role in the liturgy).[265] Daēnā took Čistā's place as men's moral guide, and Čistā's hymn came to be called after her the *Dēn Yašt*. The second divinity is the great warrior-god Vərəthraghna, who is celebrated in *Yašt* 14, and who remains a dominant figure in living Zoroastrianism. Čistā and Vərəthraghna appear together among Mithra's companions, and already in the Avesta they share a number of epithets.[266] Vərəthraghna was plainly the more powerful god, better able to protect against dangers; and today throughout the Zoroastrian community it is he who is invoked, as Bahrām, for help by travellers, and it is his hymn which is recited on their behalf.[267]

[262] *Air. Wb.* 599.

[263] See Benveniste in Benveniste et Renou, *Vṛtra et Vṛθragna*, 56-64; and for some further discussion Gershevitch, *AHM*, 166-7; Nyberg, *Rel.*, 81-3.

[264] Benveniste, op. cit., 62.

[265] The creation of these two goddesses is, however, fully in the old Indo-Iranian tradition of the personification of "abstracts".

[266] See Benveniste, op. cit., 56-61.

[267] There is a *bāj (drōn)* ceremony in honour of Panth Yazad, the "God of the Way", which since at least Sasanian times has been consecrated by the Zoroastrians with a dedication to Vərəthraghna/Bahrām; see B. N. Dhabhar, *Zand-i Khūrtak Avistāk*, text pp. 133-4 (§§ 44-45), transl. (with notes) pp. 251-2. Further on Bahrām as protector of travellers see *The Persian Farziāt-Nāmeh .. of Dastur Dārāb Pāhlan*, ed. J. J. Modi, Bombay 1924, text 21, transl. 31. The Parsi pilgrim fathers prayed to Bahrām on their storm-tossed voyage to Gujarat (see Vol. III); and in Yazd in 1964 the writer heard the *Bahrām Yašt* recited daily by a priest on behalf of a prominent member of the community who was travelling to Bombay. On shrines to Vərəthraghna/Bahrām as the travellers' god see below, Vol. II and IV.

Vərəthraghna himself is the personification of victory.[268] (A neuter noun *vərəthraghna*, meaning literally the "smiting of resistance *(vərəthra-)*",[269] exists in this sense.) The divinity Vərəthraghna is hailed, like the earth, with the epithet *ahuradāta* "created by the Ahura",[270] that is, by *Vouruna;[271] and he accompanies *Vouruna's brother Ahura, Mithra, in his daily journey across the sky to spy out good and evil[272], for Victory attends the Ahuras, and grants success in battle only to the righteous, the *ašavan*. The false and treacherous he crushes in his wrath.[273] As giver of victory Vərəthraghna plainly enjoyed the greatest popularity of old, and his *yašt*, though ill-preserved, contains what seem very archaic elements.[274] In it he is hailed as mightiest of the gods, best-armed, most fortunate; and his power and vital force are seen embodied in ten splendid incarnations:[275] a rushing wind, a golden-horned bull, a white stallion with golden ears and muzzle, a rutting camel, a fierce boar, a youth in the flower of life, a swift bird of prey, a horned ram, a wild goat, and an armed warrior. His characteristic manifestation out of all these is that of the boar, proverbial in Iran for its courage and fierceness; and in the *Mihr Yašt* he is pictured rushing along before Mithra in this shape, wild, aggressive, sharp-tusked and strong, with iron feet, iron tendons, iron jaws.[276]

The richness of Vərəthraghna's concept, its unity and coherence, and the archaic nature of the epithets with which he is hailed, strongly suggest that he is an ancient divinity, belonging in all likelihood with the Ahuras themselves to Indo-Iranian times.[277] Yet no corresponding being is known from the Vedas. There is, however, an Avestan adjective *vərəthraghan*, "victorious", which is given to several other Iranian gods

[268] On the god see in detail Benveniste-Renou, op. cit.; Thieme, *JAOS* LXXX, 1960, 312-4.

[269] See Spiegel, *EA* II, 100. *Vərəthra* in the sense of "shield" occurs in Avestan, and there is a cognate form in Ossetic, see Bartholomae, *Air. Wb.* 1421; Benveniste-Renou, op. cit., 13, Bailey, *JRAS* 1953, 110-6. Against Gershevitch's attempt (*AHM*, 158-63) to establish the existence of an Avestan homonym *vərəthra* "valour" see Thieme, loc. cit., 313 n. 25.

[270] *Yt.* 14.1. et passim.

[271] See above, pp. 49-50.

[272] *Yt.* 10.70.

[273] *Yt.* 10.72, cf. *Yt.* 14.47. Naturally non-Iranians were reckoned among the wicked, see *Yt.* 14.48.

[274] On his epithets in general, and their archaic character, see Benveniste-Renou, op. cit., 29-30, 41.

[275] *Yt.* 14.2-27, on which see in detail ibid., 33-6.

[276] *Yt.*10.70, see Gershevitch, *AHM*, 219. Although Vərəthraghna is typically represented as a boar, it is hardly justifiable to regard every poetic simile or heraldic badge with the boar as referring to this god. Thus the minstrel of the Medean Astyages is said to have described Cyrus the Persian allegorically as "a mighty beast..let loose in the swamp, bolder than a wild boar"; but to take this, as is generally done, as a reference to Vərəthraghna seems decidedly forced (see Boyce, *JRAS* 1957, 20 n. 1).

[277] This is convincingly argued by Thieme, loc. cit.

(as well as to the hero Thraētaona, and the Zoroastrian Saošyants); and this is paralleled by Vedic *vṛtrahan*.[278] The Vedic adjective was chiefly used of great Indra, and in the post-Vedic period it came to be simply a by-name of his. It was analysed by the Brahmans of old as meaning "smiting Vṛtra", the second element being taken by them for a proper name; and from this was evolved, it seems, the myth of Vṛtra, a huge dragon which tried to withhold the life-giving rain-waters from the world, but was killed by the heroic god.[279] This myth appears to be a relatively late development which took place among the Indians alone, being born of priestly lucubrations and forming part of a process by which "Indra the victorious", complex, swashbuckling, a god of warriors, came to usurp the place of Victory himself.[280] The evidence of the Mitanni treaty (in which Indra follows Mitra and Varuṇa, in the place where one might expect *Vṛtraghna

[278] That this adjective should be clearly distinguished from the abstract noun which yielded the god's own name was first clearly stated by Thieme, ibid.

[279] See Spiegel *EA* II, 100, and in detail Benveniste-Renou, op. cit. This explanation for the genesis of Vṛtra has not been accepted by all scholars. See, at length, Lommel, *Der arische Kriegsgott*, 46-76; and also, e.g., A. B. Keith, "Indra and Vṛtra", *Indian Culture* I, 1934-1935, 461-6; F. B. J. Kuiper, *IIJ*, 1959, 214. Recently H. W. Bailey, *Mithraic Studies* I, ed. Hinnells, 18, interpreted *vṛt-ra* as meaning "the strong one", and hence as the proper name of the monster of Vedic myth. "From this conflict the Avestan abstract *vərəthraghnya-* 'the defeat of the strong one' received the general meaning 'victory'." Other scholars have tried to establish that a myth of dragon-slaying attached of old to the Iranian Vərəthraghna also; but no such myth is even faintly alluded to in the Avesta. In Armenia "Vahagn" kills a monster, but the tale has little in common with the Vedic one of Vṛtra, and appears to be a late local development, see Benveniste-Renou, 84-6; Duchesne-Guillemin, *La Religion*, 178. On the Sogdian Manichaean use of the name "Vašaghn" see Benveniste-Renou, loc. cit. A late Pahlavi text contains a curious legend that "Vahrām" was elevated by Ohrmazd to be the seventh Amašaspand, because he and he alone could overcome Ahriman and bind him in hell. J. de Menasce ("La promotion de Vahrām", *RHR* CXXXIII, 1948, 5-18) suggested that this might be a development of the putatively ancient myth of Vərəthraghna's defeat of Vṛtra; but it seems a natural feat to assign in apocalyptic texts to the ever-popular god of Victory, without there existing any such antecedent in Iran. Against Dumézil's attempt (*Mélanges H. Gregoire, Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire orientale de Bruxelles* IX, 1949, 223-6) to identify the Ossetic giant Eltaghan with Vərəthraghna see Benveniste, *Études sur la langue ossète*, 130. On the theory that the myth of Indra's defeat of "Vṛtra" was modelled on that of Trita Āptya's of the dragon Viśvarūpa see Ch. 3, below. In general on tales of dragon-killings by gods and Iranian heroes see Benveniste-Renou, op. cit. 184-96.

[280] Some of those who hold that the monster Vṛtra was a primary concept argue conversely that the Vərəthraghna worshipped in Iran was the Indo-Iranian Indra. Apart from the confusion this theory supposes between the adjective *vərəthraghan* and the abstract noun, it requires one to assume that the Zoroastrians both rejected and execrated Indra as a *daēva*, and at the same time venerated him by a different name as one of their greatest and most beloved gods. Such a development may not perhaps be impossible, but it is certainly in the highest degree improbable, and the hypothesis would need very strong evidence to establish it. It cannot be said that such evidence has yet been adduced.—One slight argument in favour of the identification has been that Indra also appears in a series of ten incarnations; but this can be interpreted as a debt by him to the Indo-Iranian Vṛtraghna. Only one of these incarnations coincides with one of the Iranian god's, see Duchesne-Guillemin, *La religion*, 177.

to appear)[281] suggests that this had come about by the 14th century B.C.; and it is no wonder, therefore, that Vṛtraghna should be wholly eclipsed in the Vedas, and that there it is Indra who acts as martial helper of the Asuras—fulfilling thus a function which is wholly characteristic of "Ahura-created Vərəthraghna", but less naturally becomes the mighty *deva*.[282]

Another divinity who, like Victory, appears essentially amoral, but who also is "good" through association with the Ahuric religion, is Aši, goddess of Fortune or Recompense, whom we have already encountered in the *Yasna Haptaŋhāiti*. Literally *aši-* (< **arti-*) means the "thing attained" from the verbal root *ar* "get";[283] and the common noun occurs in the sense of what is acquired, either by luck or merit. In the *Gāthās* the word naturally has the latter implication; but it is probably as a pagan goddess of Fortune that Aši received her characteristic epithet of "great-gifted" or "treasure-laden" *(mązā-rayi-)*.[284] She drives swiftly in a chariot, perhaps to bestow her bounty on her worshippers;[285] and in some way she helps speed the chariot of Mithra, although precisely how is obscure.[286] Her original connection with Mithra is presumably that of Fortune waiting on the god of war; and Cumont identified her with the Fortune of Mithraic monuments.[287] Her name, qualified by the adjective "good" (her standing epithet in Zoroastrian times), appears also on coins of the Kušan kings, in eastern Iran.[288] Here she is represented as a female figure holding a cornucopia. There were evidently myths told about Aši; and in her hymn, *Yašt* 17, she is said to have fled from both the Turas and the swift-horsed Naotaras, to hide herself under the foot of a bull and the neck of a ram, but each time young boys and girls betrayed her.[289] Zoroaster's patron, Vištāspa, was a Naotara; but the meaning of the myth remains wholly obscure.[290] There is no doubt, however, from her *yašt* that Aši, goddess of

[281] See Thieme, loc. cit., 314.

[282] The heterogeneousness of Indra's concept, and the simplicity and unity of Vərəthraghna's, is admirably brought out by Thieme, loc. cit., 313-4.

[283] See Bailey, *Zor. Problems*, 4.

[284] On Aši as a pagan goddess see Darmesteter, *ZA* II, 599, Lommel, *Rel.*, 85.

[285] See Geiger, *Aməša Spəntas*, 118 n. 1; and on her epithet *khvanat.čakhra* Gershevitch, *AHM*, 217 n.

[286] See *Yt.* 10.68, with the various renderings of *hangrəwnāiti* listed by Gershevitch, *AHM*, 217.

[287] *TMMM* I, 151; further Gershevitch, *AHM*, 217-8.

[288] See A. Stein, *Zoroastrian deities on Indo-Scythian coins*, 11-12; and for further references, with a detailed discussion of the Kušan form APΔOXÞO, see Bailey, *Zor. Problems*, 65-8. Recently Humbach, *Kušān und Hephthaliten*, Munich 1961, 20; *WZKSO* IV, 1961, 70 ff.

[289] *Yt.* 17.55 ff.

[290] Nor can it be said that the various discussions of it have greatly advanced its understanding. For references see B. Schlerath, *Awesta-Wörterbuch, Vorarbeiten* I, 182 sub *Yt.* 17.55.

abundance, was also a goddess of fertility, and that she abhorred the immature as she did the barren[291]—an abhorrence justified in this myth through her betrayal by children. The pagan concept of Aši as Fortune, most generous to those in whose house she, "the giver of prosperity, sets her feet", is admirably conveyed in verses 6-14 of her *yašt*, verses which express a "free and sober recognition of the values of the good things of this world and . . . frank pleasure in . . . earthly riches . . ., in a world of which man is the centre and wherein the women, like the cattle, the gold, and the silver, minister to man's enjoyment."[292]

Among the gifts bestowed on men by Aši is *khvarənah*, a word itself hypostasized as an independent divinity. It used to be thought that *khvarənah-* was a derivative of *hvar* (Skt. *svar*) "sun", and that its primary meaning was therefore "glory, majestic splendour". This led to a number of deductions about the "sunny" or "fiery" nature of the god Khvarənah. Bailey, however, challenged this interpretation, demonstrating that the common noun *khvarənah*, Pahl. *khwarr(ah)*, is often used simply for the tangible things which a man may obtain in this world.[293] He suggested, therefore, that its basic meaning was probably something like "good things which are worth pursuing".[294] A rendering of "(Good) Fortune" was accordingly proposed by him for the god's name, and widely adopted. This interpretation emphasized what appears to be a basic similarity in the concepts of Khvarənah and Aši. Barr, accepting Bailey's general interpretation, observed:[295] "All good things—abundance of cattle, fertility, domestic happiness—appeared to . . . the old Aryans . . . as heavenly gifts that one could not hope to obtain if one were not on good terms with God. I think that one comes nearest to the original meaning [of *khvarənah*] by using a religious expression: 'all good gifts which come from on high'. *Khvarənah* is an expression of the divine blessing". Thus in pagan Iran *aši* appears to represent the good fortune which any man might experience though luck (and due sacrifices), whereas *khvarənah* seems rather to be a divine grace which descended on those favoured by the gods, endowing them with exceptional power and prosperity. Again there is no one English word adequate to render the name of the divinity personifying this; and

[291] See further in Ch. 6, below.
[292] Bailey, *Zor. Problems*, 9; see ibid., 4-8, for a translation of the verses in question.
[293] *Zor. Problems*, Ch. I.
[294] He originally sought to derive the word from a postulated base *hvar* "consume", but he subsequently preferred to connect it with the same base *ar* "get, acquire" which yields Arti/Aši, see the 2nd ed. of his *Zor. Problems*, intro., xxiii-iv.
[295] "Irans Profet som Τέλειος Ἄνθρωπος", *Festskrift til L. L. Hammerich*, Copenhagen 1952, 26-36. See also the remarks by W. Lentz, *A Locust's Leg, Studies in honour of S. H. Taqizadeh*, 133-4.

the old translation "Glory", although based on a false etymology, still seems sometimes apt.[296]

The great and the mighty, kings and heroes, have their fame and splendour through *khvarənah*; and if it leaves them, their state becomes changed, their fortune or glory departs. Khvarənah as a divinity is known as abiding only with the eminent, the leaders among men, and as an attribute it is guarded particularly by the "Lords", the Ahuras. Of all the gods Mithra is said to be the most richly endowed with *khvarənah*.[297] "In all the climes" it is he who is "giver of *khvarənah-*, giver of rule" *(khvarənō.dā-, khšathrō.dā-)*.[298] The divinity Khvarənah is among those who drive with Mithra across the sky;[299] and, as we have seen,[300] Mithra and *Vouruna Apąm Napāt together play an especial part in its protection. Khvarənah was not conceived, it seems, in human shape, and its name remains neuter in gender. In the 19th *yašt*, which despite its dedication to the Earth largely celebrates Khvarənah,[301] the divinity is described as having dwelt with the heroes of Iranian legend while each achieved his great or valorous deeds, passing from each in the shape of a bird when he was disgraced (like Yima),[302] or perhaps in other cases simply when he died. It was with Zoroaster also, and with Kavi Vīštāspa and with Vīštāspa's pagan forbears (dwelling briefly with their mighty foe Fraŋrasyān when he defeated Kavi Usan). As their Glory it was called the Kavyān or Kingly Glory, and became identified with the Glory of Iran, Airyanəm Khvarənah. Sometimes hostile forces are represented as trying to seize this. In *Yašt* 19, after it has left false Yima it passes into the keeping of Mithra; thereafter, fleeing from the monster Aži Dahāka, it is saved by Fire, and escapes to the mythical sea Vourukaša, where it is taken hold of by *Vouruna Apąm Napāt. Thrice the warrior Fraŋrasyan plunges naked into the lake seeking to grasp it again for himself; but each time he fails to attain "the Glory which belongs to the Iranian peoples, born and to be born".[303] This

[296] Bailey's interpretation was radically challenged by Duchesne-Guillemin, "Le xwarənah", *AION* V, 1963, 19-31, who maintained the older derivation of the word from *hvar-* "sun", and saw its significance as being "not prosperity itself, but its cause", finding its basic meaning to be a "solar fluid", a fiery semen of life, giving growth and hence prosperity to all things. This interpretation has not, however, won any wide acceptance. On the developments of this characteristic Old Iranian term in Muslim times see R. N. Frye, *K. R. Cama Oriental Institute Golden Jubilee Vol.*, Bombay 1969, 143-4.
[297] *Yt.* 19.35. See further Nyberg, *Rel.*, 71-2.
[298] *Yt.* 10.16.
[299] *Yt.* 10.66, 67. The identification made by Gershevitch in his translation of the latter verse of Khvarənah with Fire was immediately withdrawn by him, see *AHM*, 278-9.
[300] See above, pp. 42-3.
[301] On this see Darmesteter, *ZA* II, 615.
[302] See Ch. 3 below.
[303] *Yt.* 19.57.

escape of Khvarənah into the keeping of the Ahuras probably expresses a belief that the Glory of the Iranians might be fleetingly captured but could not be wholly lost to them, remaining in the grip of a foe.[304] In the legendary history of Ardašīr Pāpakān, the first Sasanian ruler (which perpetuates perhaps the older legend of the Achaemenian Cyrus[305]) the Kingly Khvarənah (Pahl. *khwarrah ī kayān*) in the form of a great ram leaves Ardabān, the last Parthian king, and runs after Ardašīr, springing finally upon his horse behind him, a sign that the sovereignty has now passed to him.[306] Later in the story Khvarənah again appears in visible form, at a moment of great peril to Ardašīr, to lead him to safety: "They tell thus, that the Kingly Glory, which had been at a distance, stood before Ardašīr and kept moving step by step until Ardašīr had escaped unharmed from that dangerous place and the hands of his enemies."[307] As long as Khvarənah remained with a mortal, no foe could overcome him.

Although in the Iranian sources Khvarənah is represented only thus, as bird or beast, a Middle Iranian form of his name, Farrah (a variant of Khwarrah) appears as ΦΑΡΡΟ on several of the Kušan coins, set under different representations of a male figure, variously garbed and accoutered.[308] This figure is diademed and nimbate, as are those of the Kušan kings themselves. In one representation it holds sword and sceptre, in another a purse in its outstretched hand. It is plainly impossible to rely on details of the iconography of the Kušan coins;[309] but it seems likely that these different representations have as common factor Khvarənah's link with royalty and rule.[310]

The gods so far considered are all "abstract" (with the exception of Thwāša "Firmament"), in that there was no natural object which one could look at and see as their regular physical embodiment; for although the association of Mithra and *Vouruna Apąm Napāt with fire and water evidently existed already in Indo-Iranian times, it was not an identification, nor essential to their being. There existed, however, another group

[304] See Lommel, *Die Yäšt's*, 174; Gershevitch, *AHM*, 59.
[305] See A. v. Gutschmid, *Kleine Schriften* III, 138 f.
[306] See the *Kārnāmag ī Ardašīr ī Pāpakān*, ed. E. K. Antia, Ch. IV, ed. D. P. Sanjana, Ch. III.
[307] *Op. cit.*, Sanjana VII.1 (= Antia XII.4): *ēdōn gōwēnd ku khwarrah ī kayān ī pad dūr be būd andar pēš ī Ardašīr ēstād ud andak andak hamē raft tā Ardašīr az ān gyāg ī dušwitarag ud az dast ī dušmenān abēwizandīhā bērōn āmad.*
[308] For a summary description of the various representations, with further references, see Bailey, *Zor. Problems*, 64.
[309] *Pace* Widengren, *Rel. Irans*, 334 with n. 11. The fact that on the Kušan coins a goddess is represented by a male figure, a god by a female one (see further below) shows how casually Greek prototypes were selected, on the basis in these instances of one salient feature.
[310] See Bailey, *Zor. Problems*, 64-5.

of gods who represented physical phenomena, and who might be said actually to *be* those phenomena. In some of these cases the concept seems simple and direct, such as can readily be apprehended by men anywhere or at any time. One such instance is that of the sun, worshipped in Iran as Hvar (Vedic Surya), or Hvar Khšaēta, the "radiant Sun";[311] another that of the moon, Māh. Both have their Avestan *yašts*, and prayers are still directed to them in Zoroastrian observance.[312] Both may be supposed to be ancient gods, indeed through the chance of a Babylonian record "Surya" is the first Indo-Iranian deity to enter history.[313] It has been suggested[314] that the concepts of the gods of moon and sun remained fairly undeveloped because each was so fully identified with the natural object, which could be regarded also in other ways—the sun for instance as a wheel impelled by other gods, or as the eye of heaven. The association with it of the god Mithra in particular is so close that the Zoroastrian prayer to the sun, the *Khoršēd Niyāyeš*, recited thrice daily in orthodox practice, is always immediately followed by the prayer to Mithra, the *Mihr Niyāyeš*, and may not be recited without it;[315] and in Zoroastrian usage of the Sasanian period the sun itself could be referred to as the "god Mithra" *(Mihr yazad)*[316], a practice represented in the living Persian language by the existence of the common noun *mihr* "sun". The veneration of Mithra tended, therefore, to overshadow that of Hvar.

In instances where the phenomenon divinised exists not as a single natural body, but in plurality, the ancient concept is necessarily more difficult to grasp, although the scope for personification is correspondingly greater. Oldenberg has set out the problem, taking as his example the Indian Agni: "Should one express the Vedic concept of the relation of Agni to fire in this way, that this is the favoured abode and sphere of activity of this divinity, who also disposes of other abodes and spheres of activity, or is Agni's relation to fire that of inseparable unity of being? Can one say that the element is the dwelling of the god, or is it the god's body?"[317] He goes on to point out that Agni's name *means* fire; where fire is, there he is, and where there is no fire of any kind, he is hardly to be

[311] On the putative existence of two Iranian words, meaning respectively "radiant, blazing" and "prince, lord", see Benveniste, *Titres et noms propres*, 20-2.
[312] In particular the *Khoršēd* and *Māh Niyāyeš*, see M. N. Dhalla, *The Nyaishes or Zoroastrian Litanies*, Columbia 1908, 2-111.
[313] See above, p. 14.
[314] Konow, *Die Inder*, 35.
[315] This, known from living practice, is explicitly enjoined in, e.g., *Mēnōg ī Khrad*, LIII.3.
[316] This is common practice in the Manichaean Middle Persian texts (which in such matters reflect Zoroastrian usage); and is found also occasionally in the Pahlavi texts, see, e.g., *Pahl. Riv. Dd.*, XLVIII.2 (ed. Dhabhar, 141).
[317] *Rel.*, 42.

found. On the other hand, the plurality of fires, being kindled, burning, dying out simultaneously in diverse places, and the variety of fire's manifestations, in sun and lightning as well as in flames on earth, prevents absolute identification. Oldenberg concludes: "Originally Agni is the element provided with a divine soul, only thereafter an ideal being who can also be conceived as detached from the element".[318] These remarks apply equally to the Iranian fire-god, Ātar, a masculine divinity whose name is presumably derived from an old neuter noun **ātar-* "fire", of unknown origin.[319] Both he and Agni appear to be originally personifications of the ever-burning hearth fire, and as such they are to be found "in the dwellings of men" *(nmānāhu mašyākanąm)*,[320] rather than in heavenly abodes. "When [Agni] is called the messenger of the gods, when it is said that the gods have set him down in human dwellings, that they have established him for the sacrifice and given him as a reward therefor eternal youth . . . he appears always in a certain separation from the compact mass of the 'gods'."[321] Living with men in their own houses, he is friend and protector, servant and master, and potent enemy of the demons of darkness and cold. The more exalted concept of the god developed evidently through priestly speculations on the role of fire in their rituals, and on the links between fire burning here below and the sun blazing in the sky. Fire was looked on as the sun's representative on earth; and as the sun in its rising and setting moved according to *ṛta/aša*, so fire too came to be associated with this cosmic force. In the Younger Avesta Ātar is said to have his strength through Aša, and to protect the creation of Aša; and he is regularly invoked there on the "son of Ahura Mazdā". Apart from this recurrent and profoundly respectful appellation there is little sign of his personification, and none of the rich accumulation of epithets such as are heaped on Agni. The difference is probably due to the restraining influence exerted on myth-making by Zoroaster's ethical teachings, whereas the Indian tendency to elaboration was especially fostered in Agni's case by the

[318] Ibid., 45.
[319] See Thieme in *Zarathustra*, ed. Schlerath, 407. Although the etymology of the word is unknown, and it is a problem why it should be used in Iranian, rather than a derivative of the well-known Indo-European one represented by Skt. *agni-* (Lat. *igni-* etc.), nevertheless it hardly seems likely that, as some have supposed (see, e.g., Wikander, *Der arische Männerbund*, 76-7; *Feuerpriester in Kleinasien und Iran*, 102 f.), Zoroaster in this one instance deliberately replaced a traditional expression by an unfamiliar one, in an attempt to break away from ancient associations; for in all other instances the prophet appears content to use old vocabulary and concepts to convey new doctrines. Such a hypothesis leaves the origin of the word in any case unexplained.
[320] *Ātaš Niyāyeš*, 7.
[321] Oldenberg, *Rel.*, 105.

enormous importance which the Brahmans came to attach to the ritual of sacrifice, in which for them fire had a central part.[322]

The deification of water is even more complex than that of fire. Here also unity is broken into plurality, and into apparent diversity (from raindrops to the great ocean, from still wells to rushing streams); and in addition the element is both venerated and consumed. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that there was more than one water divinity both in India and in pagan Iran. In both lands the Waters themselves are divinised, being invoked as goddesses, the Āpas.[323] The identification here of divinity and element is so complete that when the Vedic poet speaks of water as a wholesome drink he says that the Āpas, the goddesses, are wholesome to drink;[324] and in a passage of *Yasna Haptaŋhāiti* (*Y*.38.3) the Waters are both venerated as wives of the Ahura, and celebrated as easy to cross and good to bathe in. There is thus a distinction in this respect between the Āpas and their "husband", *Vouruna Apąm Napāt; for he is a god who lives in the water, but who is not, like them, *identified* with the element. Nevertheless so wonderful is his nature that although the ocean is not big enough to compass him, yet he may be present in the bowl of water used in an act of worship.[325]

Another water deity who in later times over-shadowed even great *Vouruna in Iran was the river goddess Arədvī Sūrā Anāhitā. *Sūra* is a common adjective meaning "strong, mighty", and *anāhita*, "undefiled, immaculate", is likewise an adjective. Both are used of other divinities also. Only "arədvī" is special to this goddess, a word which is otherwise unknown.[326] On etymological grounds it too is interpreted as an adjective, meaning "moist, humid", but it was once thought that, substantivised, it formed the goddess' name. Lommel has, however, presented a strong case for thinking that *arədvī* too is properly no more than an attribute.[327] The original name of the Indo-Iranian goddess, he suggested, was Sarasvatī "She who possesses waters'. In India she continued to be worshipped by this name, which she gave there to a small but very holy river in Madhyadeśa (the Punjab); whereas in Iran Sarasvatī became, by normal sound-changes, *Harahvatī, a name preserved in the region called in Avestan Harakhvaitī, and known to the Greeks as Arachosia—a region rich in

[322] In this their ritual differed from the Iranian one, see Ch. 6, below.
[323] The word *āp-* is grammatically feminine, and in the Pahlavi *Bundahišn* water is listed among the four essentially female things in the world (together with earth, plants and fish). See *GBd.* XV a.1 (BTA, 143) (= *Ind. Bd.* XVI.6, transl. West, *SBE* V, 61).
[324] See Oldenberg, *Rel.*, 45.
[325] See Lüders, *Varuna* I, 48.
[326] See Bartholomae, *Air. Wb.* 194-5.
[327] See his "Anahita-Sarasvati", *Asiatica, Festschrift F. Weller*, Leipzig 1954, 405-13.

rivers and lakes.[328] Originally, *Harahvatī was the personification of the great mythical river which flows down from high Harā into the sea Vourukaša, and is the source of all the waters of the world; and just as the wandering Iranians called great mountains near which they lived Harā, and broad lakes Vourukaša, so, it seems, they gave *Harahvatī's name to life-giving rivers; and their Indian cousins did the same.[329] It sometimes happens, however, that a divinity's name is gradually forgotten in favour of an attribute (thus in India the goddess Earth was regularly invoked as Pṛthivī, the "Broad One"); and so, it seems, *Harahvatī's own name came to be eclipsed by her attributes *arədvī* and *sūrā*, which in later times coalesced to give her the new name of Ardvīsūr. The third epithet, *anāhitā*, was possibly added to the other two in fixed conjunction in order to help the identification, in Achaemenian times, of the Iranian river goddess *Harahvatī arədvī sūrā with the alien fertility goddess Anaïtis; but this is a matter which must be considered in a later volume.

The Avestan hymn to Arədvī Sūrā is one of the longest and apparently most ancient of the *yašts*. In it the goddess is described as a beautiful strong maiden, clad in beaver skins,[330] who drives a chariot drawn by four horses—wind *(vayu-)*, rain, cloud and sleet.[331] As one of the divinities who bring water she is worshipped as goddess of fertility, who purifies the seed of all males, the wombs of all females, and makes the milk flow which nourishes the young.[332] Like the Indian Sarasvatī, she nurtures crops and herds; but it seems less characteristic of a river goddess that Arədvī also bestows rich material possessions—horses and chariots, arms and household goods[333]—and that warriors pray to her to grant them victory in battle and the destruction of foes.[334] Some of the verses describing these aspects of her power correspond closely to verses addressed to Aši, goddess of Fortune;[335] and it seems some blurring of identity took place between these two bountiful, chariot-driving goddesses. Linguistically Arədvī Sūrā's *yašt* appears older than Aši's, and so it has been assumed that where the two divinities have invocations in common, Aši was the borrower.[336]

[328] Old Persian Harahuvatī, see Bartholomae, *Air. Wb.* 1788.
[329] See Lommel, art. cit., 408.
[330] *Yt.* 5.129. For the description of the goddess later in the *yašt* which derives apparently from a cult image see Vol. II.
[331] *Yt.* 5.120.
[332] *Yt.* 5.2.
[333] *Yt.* 5.130.
[334] *Yt.* 5.34 ff.
[335] I.e. *Yt.* 17.6-11 = *Yt.* 5.130, 102, 127.
[336] See Geiger, *Aməša Spəntas*, 111-4. (Geiger was among the scholars who considered Aši to be part of Zoroaster's own original conception, and he assumed therefore that this "abstract" divinity was later given substance through borrowings from Arədvī; but against

In an oral literature such criteria cannot be relied upon, however. Once Arədvī Sūrā gained greater popularity, her hymn would have been more often recited, and so would be better preserved and have in the end the appearance of greater antiquity. "Great-gifted" Aši is herself a Gathic figure, worshipped of old; and probably what happened was that as she suffered gradual eclipse by Arədvī, verses once addressed to her came to be uttered also in her rival's honour— Arədvī being in fact the debtor.

Some other verses in *Yašt* 5, which have masculine instead of feminine pronouns, appear to have been adapted to the worship of the goddess from hymns to other divinities, such as that to Tištrya, or possibly even a lost hymn to *Vouruna Apąm Napāt.[337] Much of Arədvī's hymn is, however, unquestionably proper to her and to her alone; and in these verses there is constant blending of the worshippers' apprehension of the thing personified and of the personifying divinity. Arədvī is hailed as a goddess, worthy of worship, bountiful to those who please her, stern towards those who do not, one who dwells in stately palaces;[338] but she is also the mythical river itself, "as great in bigness as all these waters which flow forth upon the earth".[339] As a goddess, she is essentially a goddess of the waters, and like the Indian Sarasvatī she is invoked with the Āpas,[340] and in later times her hymn is simply called the "Hymn to the Waters", *Ābān Yašt*. There is an ancient mantic link between water and wisdom;[341] and priests and their pupils pray to Arədvī for wisdom and knowledge,[342] while Sarasvatī protects the study of the Vedas.[343] Wisdom is also, as we have seen, an attribute of the Indian Varuṇa, god of the waters, and of "the Ahura" (i.e. *Vouruna) in Iran; and in the Pahlavi rendering of the *Vahman Yašt* Zoroaster is himself represented as receiving from Ahura Mazdā "the wisdom of all-knowledge in the form of water" *(khrad ī harwisp-āgāhīh pad āb-kirb)*.[344]

That the river Arədvī sprang from the summit of Harā was, it seems, generally known to the goddess' devotees, and not merely a matter of

this see further below.) On the two *yašts* see also Christensen, *Études sur le zoroastrisme de la Perse antique*, 8, *Les Kayanides*, 14.
[337] See e.g., *Yt.* 5. 53, which appears to have been borrowed from the *Mihr Yašt* (*Yt.* 10.11), but may rather derive from a lost *yašt* to *Vouruna Apąm Napāt, whom as a water divinity Arədvī gradually eclipsed.
[338] *Yt.* 5.101.
[339] *Yt.* 5.3.
[340] For the Rigvedic passages see Lommel, art. cit., 408.
[341] See in general Chadwick, *Growth of Literature* I, 648-50; for the Indo-Iranian tradition in particular Lüders, *Varuṇa*, I, 25 ff.
[342] *Yt.* 5.86, cf. v. 91.
[343] See Lommel, art. cit., 411.
[344] See *Zand-i Vohuman Yašt*, III.5-7 (ed. BTA, 8, 103).

priestly learning. It remained, moreover, a part of her living cult for many generations, if a Greek inscription discovered in Asia Minor from Roman times has been rightly interpreted, for this appears to be dedicated to "the great goddess Anaītis of high Harā" (βαρξοχάρα-).[345] From this mythical mountain Arədvī flows down upon the sea Vourukaša, and other rivers carry her waters thence over all the lands. Rain, too, has its source in Vourukaša, from which it is released each year by Tištrya, god of the rain-star. He, it seems, is another Indo-Iranian divinity, whose name appears in the Vedas as Tiṣya;[346] and the star which he personifies is usually identified as Sirius or Canis Major[347] (although the problem of connecting the rising of the dog-star with a rainy season for the Indo-Iranians at any period has proved a difficult one[348]). To win the rain water from Vourukaša Tištrya has to struggle annually with the evil forces which oppose him. There is the witch Dužyāiryā "Bad Harvest", whom he must bind "with twofold bonds and threefold bonds . . . as if a thousand men were to bind one man";[349] but his fiercest foe is Apaoša, "Dearth".[350] Each year god and demon meet in the shape of horses on the shores of the lake. Tištrya is white, beautiful, with golden ears and muzzle, Apaoša black, hairless and hideous.[351] At first the demon drives Tištrya back from the shore, but finally the god, strengthened by men's prayers, defeats his foe, and rushes into the waves. "He goes to all the bays of the sea Vourukaša, the mighty, beautiful, deep, and to all the beautiful tributaries and all the beautiful outlets, in the shape of a . . . horse. Then the waters flow down . . . from the sea Vourukaša."[352] Elsewhere, as we have seen, the Waters are themselves personified as horses, driven by Apąm Napāt; and Lommel has suggested[353] that Tištrya's is an old nature-myth, in which the rival stallions, god and demon, fight, and the victor goes to the Waters who desire him,[354] and begets rain. "Then Tištrya rises again from the sea Vourukaša

[345] See R. Schmitt, "BAPZOXAPA—ein neues Anāhitā Epitheton aus Kappadokien", *KZ* LXXXIV, 1970, 207-10. On Harā see further in Ch. 5, below.

[346] On him see most recently B. Forssman, "Apaoša, der Gegner des Tištriia", *KZ* LXXXII, 1968, 37-61.

[347] For the most recent learned discussion see Henning, "An astronomical chapter of the Bundahišn", *JRAS* 1942, 247-8.

[348] For the main literature on it see Lommel, *Die Yäšt's*, 46-7. On various attempts at dating from calculations of the heliacal rising of Sirius see S. H. Taqizadeh, *Old Iranian Calendars*, 22 with n. 4.

[349] *Yt.* 8.51-5.

[350] Literally "Non-Thriving, Kein-Gedeihen-habend" < *a. paṷša*, Ved. *póṣa* "thriving, abundance", see Forssman, art. cit.

[351] *Yt.* 8.18-21.

[352] *Yt.* 8.46-7.

[353] *Die Yäšt's*, 48-50.

[354] *Yt.*8.41.

. . . and the bold . . . wind *(vāta-)* drives the rain and cloud upon places, upon dwellings, upon the seven climes".[355] One of the epithets particular to Tištrya in the Avesta is *khšviwi-vāza-* "swift-flying"; and twice in his *yašt*[356] his going to the waters is compared, in its speed and directness, with the arrow shot by Ǝrəkhša, the "best archer among the Iranians" (who in legend is held to have established the border of Iran by a stupendous bow-shot, which he died in making).[357] It used to be thought that it was this simile which provided grounds for the later identification of Tištrya with Tīri, a divinity unknown to the Avesta;[358] for his name came to be reduced to Tīr, and the Old Iranian word for "arrow", *tigra*, also developed into *tīr*. It is now known, however, that this word was still pronounced as *tigr* down to at least the 3rd century A.C.,[359] and long before this Tīri appears (as TEIPO) on Kušan coins where, although male, he is represented as Artemis with bow and quiver.[360] Moreover, in Iranian tradition his festival, Tīragān, was regarded as celebrating Ǝrəkhša's great arrow-shot, a tradition which probably goes back to Parthian times. It seems, therefore, that the association with arrows was proper rather to Tištrya, because of the ancient simile in his *yašt*, and was acquired by Tīri through his identification with the Avestan divinity, the fact that his name later became synonymous with the Persian word for "arrow" being accidental.

The festival of Tīragān, one of the greatest holy days of ancient Iran, is essentially a rain-festival, and though it is named for Tīri, the religious services solemnised on that day in Zoroastrian observance are all dedicated, in their Avestan liturgies, to the rain-god Tištrya. However, in the Middle Persian preliminaries to these liturgies, which are always recited before the Avestan words, the dedication *(khšnūman)* is made to *Teštar-Tīr, rāyōmand, khwarrōmand* "Teštar-Tīr, the splendid, the glorious".[361] Further, although Tīri is unknown in the Avesta, yet in the Zoroastrian calendar both the fourth month of the year is named for him, and the thirteenth day of the month. Nevertheless, the Zoroastrian services

[355] *Yt.* 8.32, 33.

[356] *Yt.* 8.6, 37.

[357] Ǝrəkhša's name would seem to have been known to the ancient Persians as well as to the "Avestan" people, if it is indeed identical with the Irkaša of the Persepolis fortification tablets—which must, however, remain doubtful, see Gershevitch, *Studia . . . A. Pagliaro oblata*, II, 191.

[358] On him see most recently W. Eilers, *Semiramis, Sb. der Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 274 Bd., 2 Abh., Vienna 1971, 43-5.

[359] This is the form *(tygr)* in which it appears in the Middle Persian texts from Turfan, see Henning *BSOS* IX, 1937, 88.

[360] See Stein, *Zor. deities on Indo-Scythian coins*, 6-7.

[361] I am indebted to Dr. Firoze Kotwal for drawing my attention to this fact.

solemnised on each thirteenth day are dedicated in Avestan to Tištrya, and in Middle Persian to Teštar-Tīr together. Moreover, every *niyāyeš* or *yašt* recited on that day ends with the Middle Persian words: *rōz nēk nām, rōz pāk nām, rōz mubārak, rōz Teštar-Tīr yazad* "day of fair fame, day of pure fame, auspicious day, day of Teštar-Tīr Yazad".[362] These formulas suggest a complete identification by the Middle Iranian period of Tīr with the Avestan Tištrya. Yet the Irani Zoroastrians today know the ancient festival of Tīragān as "the feast of Tīr and Teštar" *(jašan-i Tīr u Teštar)*; and they also have shrines dedicated to "Tīr and Teštar",[363] the shorter name coming first, in contrast to the liturgical order. These popular usages point to an association between these two divine beings rather than their identification. However, a Pahlavi text states simply that "Tīr is Teštar",[364] which supports the liturgical evidence; and this is further confirmed by a piece of ritual which takes place during a *drōn* service in honour of the star-*yazad* Vanant, as it is solemnized among the Parsis. In this the *drōn* itself is cut into four pieces, assigned respectively to Vanant and his three associates, namely Teštar-Tīr, Sadvēs and Haftōiring.[365] It may be, therefore, that at some point theologians declared the identity of the two divine beings, but that the laity proved less malleable than the priesthood.

One of the striking facts about Tištrya and Tīri is that their names, although both well attested, never occur together in any ancient source or setting. Tīri's is altogether unknown in the Avesta (unless one regards the proper name Tīrō.nakathwa,[366] of doubtful interpretation, as compounded with his), whereas Tištrya's role there and in the Zoroastrian cult is considerable (for he not only has his own *yašt*, but is venerated after Mithra in the *Khoršēd Niyāyeš*, which is recited thrice daily). On the other hand, no proper names are known which are formed with Tištrya's, whereas there are a number, from early Achaemenian, Parthian and Sasanian times, with Tīri- or Tīr- as their first element.[367] In the Parthian

[362] This is the standard formula for concluding such prayers, only the *yazad's* name altering with the day.

[363] One exists in the village of Sharifabad, near Yazd.

[364] *GBd.* III.18 (BTA, 43). That Tištrya is the protective divinity of 13th day is indicated in *Supp. texts to Šnš.* (ed. Kotwal) XXII.13, whereas in the next chapter of the same work, XXIII.2, Tīr is explicitly named in the same connection. On this see further in Vol. II.

[365] See Erachji Meherji-Rana, *Purseš-Pāsokh* (in Gujarati), p. 68, question 272. This *drōn (bāj)* service is still solemnised annually in Navsari on Rōz Hōrmazd, Māh Farvardīn.

[366] *Yt.* 13. 126, see Bartholomae, *Air. Wb.* 651.

[367] For examples, with references to earlier discussions, see W. B. Henning apud A. D. H. Bivar, *BSOAS* XXIV, 1961, 191; and add now OP *Teriyadada* from the Elamite tablets, see Benveniste, *Titres et noms propres*, 94. Henning first interpreted the Middle Iranian name *Tirmihr* as meaning "(trusting in) a contract of alliance with Tīr(i)", but later proposed more simply "(given by, or devoted to) Tīr and Mihr" see *BSOAS* XXVIII, 1965,

period Tīr appears on the Kušan coins in eastern Iran, but not Tištrya. What is still more remarkable, although Tištrya is celebrated in an evidently ancient *yašt*, he is one of the few divinities so honoured who has no day named for him; whereas, as we have seen, Tīr, who has no place in the Avesta, is prominent in the Zoroastrian calendar, with day, month and a noted festival. This can only mean that by the time the dedications of this calendar were evolved (probably in the late Achaemenian period),[368] Tīri had come to be fully recognised and venerated by Zoroastrians. These facts all seem compatible with the theory that Tīri was a divinity first worshipped by the western Iranians, who incorporated his cult into Zoroastrianism at their conversion, associating him with Tištrya both because of a certain rough similarity in the names, and (presumably) because of a resemblance in their beneficent functions. No satisfactory etymology of the name Tīri has been proposed, nor any adequate explanation of a development of Tīri from Tiur.[369] Nevertheless, it seems possible that Tīri is to be identified with the old Armenian god Tiur, who was perhaps adopted by the Armenians from the previous inhabitants of their land.[370] If the neighbouring Medes also learnt to venerate Tiur/Tīri, it may be the Magi who brought his cult with them when they embraced Zoroastrianism.

The Avestan Tištrya is called "lord and overseer of all stars";[371] and as his lieutenants he has other stars "of watery nature" *(afščithra-)* to help him.[372] These are Tištryaēnī (Canis minor), the Paoiryaēnī (the Pleiades) and the Upapaoirī, "the stars in front of the Pleiades".[373] There are also three great stars or constellations which according to the Pahlavi books share with him the rule of the heavens. Tištrya himself dominates the east. In the south is Satavaēsa (Antares),[374] who aids him by scatter-

250. [Nyberg, in throwing doubt on Henning's reading of the name *tryprn* (see his article in *Festskrift C. Kempe*, p. 735) overlooked the occurrence in Kharoshthi of *Tiravharna* (see Henning, art. cit., 191 n. 2).] Tīri and Mithra are further linked by being the only two gods to enjoy the epithet "possessing swift arrows" *(khšwivi.išu)*.

[368] See further in Vol. II.

[369] See Eilers, *Semiramis*, 44 n. 75. As for the name Tištrya, Forssman seeks to explain this (art. cit., 59-60), as derived from **tri* "three" and **stŕ* "star", and meaning "belonging to the three stars", a name which he suggests was given to Sirius because this star is "not too far away" from the three stars of Orion's belt.

[370] See Eilers, loc. cit. The great popularity of the cult of Tiur/Tīr in Armenia in Parthian and Sasanian times is amply attested. Nevertheless Widengren's identification of "Apollo and Artemis" of the temple at Armavir as Tīr and Anāhīd, rather than Mihr and Anāhīd (*Rel. Irans* 178, 186) lacks proof. Mihr was also fittingly worshipped in Zoroastrian Armenia.

[371] *Yt.* 8.44.

[372] *Yt.* 8.12.

[373] See Henning, "An astronomical chapter of the Bundahišn", *JRAS* 1942, 247-8.

[374] Ibid., 246-7.

ing the rain-waters over the earth.[375] The west is ruled by Vanant, the "Conqueror", who is Vega,[376] and whose great task is to guard the "gates" in the mythical mountain in the centre of the world through which the sun passes daily.[377] Vanant has his own short hymn, *Yašt* 20, which is in fact a formula of exorcism; and tradition tells how in the 16th century the great Parsi priest, Meherji Rana, ended an eclipse by reciting this *yašt* in the presence of the emperor Akbar.[378] The north is dominated by Haptōiringa (Ursa Major); and since hell is in the north, he is especially invoked against demons.[379] All four, Tištrya, Satavaēsa, Vanant and Haptōiringa, are called upon in that order in Zoroastrian observance on the day Tīr of each month.[380]

The ancient Iranians venerated the god of the sky above, Asmān, and the goddess of the earth below, Zam. The link between Father Sky and Mother Earth is evidently very old; and in the Vedas the names of the two divinities Dyaus and Pṛthivī (originally an epithet, the "Broad One") appear in a fixed compound, although the pair no longer had an important part in the literature or religious life. The Iranian word for the sky itself, *asmān*, meant simply "stone", the vault of heaven being thought of as substantial and hard, forming as it were a shell about the earth.[381] There is no hymn to the Sky-god in the Avesta; but the 19th *yašt* is dedicated to Earth, Zam (although largely concerned with Khvarənah); and Bailey has shown that the name of this pagan goddesss survives in Khotanese Saka as *ysama-śśandai* or (through her epithets only) as *śśandrāmata*.[382] From these forms, used by the Buddhist Sakas for the goddess Śrī, he deduced an Old Iranian *Zam śuantā ārmati, interpreted as "Bounteous beneficent Earth". Among the Sakas the goddess was evidently known also simply as *śśandai*, "Bounteous One," or *śśandrāmata*, "Bounteous, beneficent one".[383]

Between the solid earth beneath their feet, and what they regarded as the solid sky above, the Indo-Iranians apprehended evidently empty

[375] *Yt.* 8.9. In Sasanian times Satavaēsa's name, as Sadwēs, was given to a rain-making divinity in the Manichaean version of the rain-myth, see Boyce, "Sadwēs and Pēsūs", *BSOAS* XIII, 1951, 908-15.
[376] See Henning, art. cit., 247.
[377] See Darmesteter, *ZA* II, 418 n. 38.
[378] See ibid., p. 644, and further in Vol. III of the present work.
[379] Ibid., p. 418 n. 37.
[380] *Sirōza* I.13.
[381] See in more detail in Chapter 5.
[382] See his "Saka śśandrāmata", *Festschrift W. Eilers*, ed. G. Wiessner, Wiesbaden 1967, 136-43.
[383] This provides a good parallel to the development postulated by Lommel, whereby *Harahvatī arədvī sūrā came to be invoked simply as Arədvī Sūrā.

space, a void; and in this void there moved perceptibly from time to time the wind. We have already met two Avestan words for wind, *vayu* and *vāta*, both from the same verbal root *vā* "blow", and used, it would seem, as synonyms. Vərəthraghna takes *vāta* as one of his shapes; and *vayu* is one of the four horses which draw Arədvī's chariot. Derivatives of the former word, *vāta*, are still in common use for "wind" in living Iranian languages; and the ancient divinity Vāta, in both the Avesta and Vedas, is god of the tangible wind that blows.[384] Since the wind brings rain, "bold Vāta" is a helper of Tištrya and Satavaēsa, aiding them in drawing up the waters and scattering the clouds.[385] On a Kušan coin he appears as OAΔO (i.e. Middle Iranian Vād),[386] "a bearded god with flowing hair, holding in his hands the ends of his floating garments".[387] His is an instance in which the identification of the god with the thing divinised is so close that translators are sometimes at a loss to know whether in a particular passage it is the god Wind or the wind itself which is spoken of.[388]

The Vedic concept of Vāta is similar to the Iranian; but with both peoples the other wind-god, Vāyu (in Avestan Vayu)[389] is a more complex and powerful being. In his case the natural phenomenon which was the basis of the concept has faded much more into the background; but although this is true in both countries (which suggests that Vāyu is an ancient god), there is not much else closely in common between the Indian and Iranian deities. In the Vedas Vāyu, "the soul of the gods",[390] is often linked with Indra; and in the cult he is entitled to the first draught of *soma*, as "the swiftest of the gods".[391] There is no suggestion of different sides to his character; but the Avestan Vayu has two aspects. In one he is "harmful" *(zinakə)*; and in his hymn, *Yašt* 15, worship is offered only to "that Vayu which belongs to the Bounteous Spirit".[392] In the later Zoroastrian tradition a clear distinction is made between the "good Vāy" and the "evil Vāy", the latter being little more than a demon of death. Much

[384] Despite the caution shown by some scholars it seems reasonable to suppose, in the light of the parallel Vedic and Iranian evidence, that Vāta is an ancient god. According to Herodotus, I.131, the "winds" were among the six natural objects worshipped, under "Zeus", by the ancient Persians. In VII.191 he records an especial ceremony in their honour. See Gray, *Foundations*, 167.
[385] See *Yt.* 8.33, and for further references Gray, loc. cit.
[386] Stein, *Zor. deities on Indo-Scythian coins*, 4 with fig. v.
[387] Gray, op. cit., pp. 167-8.
[388] E.g. *Yt.* 10.9.
[389] In Avestan *ā* has become *ă*. This change is particular to Avestan. The Pahlavi form of the god's name is Vāy.
[390] *RV* 10.168.4; see A. Hillebrandt, *Vedische Mythologie* II, 296.
[391] See Keith, *Rel. and phil. I*, 139; Oldenberg, *Rel.*, 227.
[392] *Yt.* 15.5, 57.

study has been devoted to the concept of the two Vayus;[393] but it seems probable that Barr came closest to the heart of the matter in the following observations:[394] "The Aryans saw in Vāyu both the real wind that blows, hurries forth in the storm with violence and swiftness and is not to be resisted, and the first cosmic life-principle. In all living beings Vāyu is the life-breath, in the Cosmos he is the breath of Life. But Vāyu is also the wind that all the living breathe out at death. So he is both the god of life and death . . . It could not be ignored [by the Zoroastrians] that he hunts, attains and vanquishes both creations, that of the good spirit and that of the evil. All life is in his power". As the lord of life and death Vayu is both kindly and cruel; and he is conceived as a warrior-god, with golden armour and a golden chariot,[395] the most swift, strong and mighty, who conquers at a blow.[396] In one verse in his *yašt* he declares that he carries off the man who has been bound;[397] and later tradition suggests that this means the man already fettered by death. As all men come to this, Vayu has the exclusive epithet of "all-conqueror" *(vanō.vīspa-)*.[398] Another Avestan text, the *Aogəmadaēčā*, celebrates his ruthlessness:[399] all else may be overcome by the man of strength and courage, "only the path of the pitiless Vayu can never be avoided". This in itself appears sufficient to account for the awe which Vayu inspired, and the dread which in one aspect he aroused.

In his own hymn Vayu appears in unusual isolation; but in the later tradition he is associated or even identified with Rāman Khvāštra, and his hymn is called the *Rām Yašt*. As we have seen, Rāman is probably a

[393] Ideas first advanced by Nyberg, *Rel.*, 300-1, were developed by Wikander in his *Vayu* I (Uppsala 1941). (Wikander's subsequent attempt to associate Vayu with the hero Rustam, *La nouvelle Clio* II, 1950, 310-29, can hardly be taken seriously, see Vol. IV, appendix.) See also Widengren in his various books on Old Iranian religion; Zaehner, *Zurvan*, 82-91; Duchesne-Guillemin, *La Religion*, 182-4. Recently Burrow, *JRAS* 1973, 131, has suggested that the "good Vayu" was the divinity venerated by the Iranians, the "bad Vayu" the one worshipped by their enemies, the Indian settlers in Iran, who (he thought) provided the "daēvic" element in Avestan vocabulary. A number of penetrating observations about Vayu were made by Lommel, *Die Yašt's*, 144-50, who was critical of those who failed to distinguish sufficiently between Vayu and Vāta. Rather surprisingly Nyberg, although he elevated Vayu into one of his "supreme gods", nevertheless identified him with Vāta (see his *Rel.*, 75), in which he was followed by his pupils. Cf. also Barr, *Avesta*, 43-4.

[394] Barr, *Avesta*, 42-3; English translation by Duchesne-Guillemin, *Western Response*, 59. The order of the sentences has been rearranged a little here to suit the present context.

[395] Golden armour, apparel and ornaments are not uncommonly ascribed to the gods; and it seems forced to lay weight on this (see Wikander, *Vayu* 30-3).

[396] For a detailed analysis of Vayu's epithets (contained in *Yt.* 15.42-7) see Wikander, op. cit.

[397] *Yt.* 15.52.

[398] See *Yt.* 15.44.

[399] See the edition by Duchesne-Guillemin, *JA* 1936, 241-55; Wikander, op. cit., 96-101.

concept of Zoroastrian times, who was linked also with Mithra;[400] but the reason for the close association between him and Vayu remains uncertain. Darmesteter suggested[401] that, as with Mithra, the link was through Rāman's epithet, since as god of the air Vayu also possessed "good pastures", the great spaces of sky in which the clouds live, the celestial "cows" whose milk is the rain. Another explanation, offered in a Pahlavi text, is that the "good Vāy" is called Rām (a word which can mean joy as well as peace) because he guides the souls of the righteous on their way to Paradise, and so gives joy to them.[402] Whatever the true explanation, it is presumably Vayu's abode in the empty air which brought him also into association with Zurvān "Time" and Thwāša "Firmament", in the speculations of later Zoroastrianism. There is nothing, however, in Vayu's *yašt* to suggest that such speculations had any place in Iranian paganism. Zurvān himself has a minor role only in the Zoroastrian liturgy,[403] and as a divinity is not mentioned in any of the *yašts*. His place in later theology and belief will accordingly be discussed hereafter.[404]

As well as the "abstract" gods, and these gods of natural phenomena, the pagan Iranians evidently worshipped cult gods, namely Haoma and Gəuš Urvan, divine beings who appear to have been created by the recurrent acts of worship. They will accordingly be considered in connection with the ritual.[405] Linked with one of this pair of deities are two other divine beings. One is Gəuš Tašan, whose name means "Creator of the Cow" (or "Bull"—the one word is used for both in Avestan). This divinity is spoken of by Zoroaster himself, and in *Yasna Haptaŋhāiti* he is invoked together with Gəuš Urvan (as he still is in Zoroastrian ritual). In the *yasna* he is called upon in association with the Gathic Aməša Spəntas.[406] Nothing is related of him, his character or functions; but it is generally agreed that he is to be identified with Vedic Tvastṛ, the "Fashioner".[407] The prophet apparently also refers to him as Thwərəštar, a name etymologically identical with Tvastṛ.[408] In the Vedas the "Fashioner" is the smith of the gods, and maker also of living creatures.[409] It is probable that

[400] See above, p. 60.

[401] *Ét. ir.* II, 194.

[402] *GBd.* XXVI. 29 (ed. TDA, 166.7-9, transl. BTA, 217. Cited by Wikander, op. cit., 18).

[403] For the Av. passages see Gray, *Foundations*, 124.

[404] See Vol. II.

[405] See Ch. 6.

[406] See Gray, *Foundations*, 146.

[407] See Bartholomae, *Arische Forschungen* III, 25-9.

[408] *Y.* 29.6. See M. Leumann, *Asiatische Studien* I-IV, 1954, 79 ff.; Gershevitch, *AHM*, 55-6.

[409] On this divinity see Oldenberg, *Rel.*, 237-9; Keith, *Rel. and phil.* I, 204-6; Macdonell, *Mythology*, 115-8; Hillebrandt, *Ved. Mythologie* II, 372-84.

in pagan Iran, as in Vedic India, there were a number of creator gods; but it seems remarkable that Zoroaster should himself have acknowledged Thworəštar, and by use of the name Gəuš Tašan have assigned to him, apparently, a particular creative function (or assented to his possession of it). One can but suppose that the prophet saw this ancient divinity as a servant of Ahura Mazdā, who had delegated to him one specialised creativity.[410] Outside the Gāthās the word *thworəštar* occurs only twice,[411] and each time it appears to be used of Ahura Mazdā himself—perhaps in emphasis upon the Zoroastrian doctrine of the one supreme Creator.

The other divinity who, like Gəuš Tašan, is regularly associated with Gəuš Urvan is Druvāspā. The name of this goddess appears in origin to be simply an epithet, meaning "possessing sound horses"; and she seems a secondary creation[412], evolved presumably after the Iranian warriors had learnt to harness the horse. *Yašt* 9, called in Pahlavi *Gōš Yašt* (for Gəuš Urvan) is in honour of Druvāspā; but only the first two verses show originality, the larger part of the hymn being made up of invocations very close to those found in the hymns to Arədvī and Aši. In the opening verse Druvāspā is said to care for cattle, large and small; and she has been identified on one of the Kušan coins as represented by a male figure with a trotting horse, under which is written ΔΡΟΟΑCΠΟ.[413] The fact that Druvāspā is a goddess makes it possible that she evolved originally from an epithet of the chariot-driving Aši, who in pagan times appears to have been a powerful divinity, probably much worshipped by fighting men.

Both Gəuš Tašan and Druvāspā appear as divinities defined by special functions. Another such being is the modest Hadiš, who is known only from a fairly "recent" part of the Avesta, and in the Pahlavi books.[414] It is possible, nevertheless, that he was a minor pagan divinity. His name means "Abode, Home", and the Sasanian glossators called him simply the "Spirit of the House" *(mēnōg ī khānag)*. According to his epithets Hadiš possessed pastures, bestowed grain and well-being, and was compassionate. The only legend recorded of him tells how he was sent as divine messenger to the first man and woman, to teach them how to bless their bread. As Darmesteter pointed out,[415] the Vedic parallel to Hadiš is Vāstospati, "Lord of the Homestead", a beneficent minor divinity who presided over the foundation of a house.

[410] See Leumann, loc. cit. It has often been noted that Zoroaster uses the word *dāmi* also of the divinity Ārmaiti (*Y.* 34.10; cf. *Vr.* 19.2); but Gershevitch, *AHM*, 169 suggests that this should be an adjective, meaning "of the Creator", rather than the noun "creator".

[411] *Y.* 42.2; 57.2. On these passages see Gershevitch, *AHM*, 54. In his further discussion, in which he seeks to identify Gəuš Tašan with Spənta Mainyu (as Darmesteter and others had done earlier) Gershevitch appears to force the evidence a little in the interests of the theory of Zoroaster's strict monotheism.

[412] See Lommel, *Die Yašt's*, 57-8.

[413] See Stein, *Zor. deities on Indo-Scythian coins*, 3-4 with fig. iii; Darmesteter, *ZA* II, 432.

[414] *Vr.* 1.9; 2.11; 9.5; *Dk.* VII.1.12-3 (ed. Madan, 593.11 ff.). On Hadiš see Darmesteter, *Ét. ir.* II, 201-3; Henning, *BSOAS* XII, 1947, 59-62.

These then appear to have been the divinities of pagan Iran who were accepted by Zoroaster as beneficent.[416] Of those whom he rejected as false gods, the *daēvas*, only the names of Indra, Nåŋhaithya and Saurva are known.[417] In Vedic India these gods were honoured in the same pantheon as the Asuras, by the same priests, and with in general the same rites; and this was presumably the case also in pagan Iran. The Vedic Indra and Nāsatya have benevolent traits, but "beside the Ādityas, the wrathful and compassionate guardians of *ṛta*, there stands ever Indra in another role, as the lavish friend of his worshippers, caring little about sin and righteousness, one who belongs to a divine world which, ordained originally to serve the human desire for power and wealth, was indifferent to the world of moral ideas, and only slowly and superficially entered into contact with it."[418] As for Śarva, it is possible that already in Indo-Iranian times he was a menacing being, like the Vedic Rudra with whom he is connected, who has been characterised as "terrible as a wild beast", a divinity through whom evil reached up into the world of the gods.[419] It is not difficult to see why Zoroaster, with his passionate pursuit of righteousness, should have rejected such gods, together with all amoral divine beings who were associated with them.

In general, however, the Indo-Iranians seem to have regarded their divinities hopefully, as being by nature kindly disposed towards men; and evil they appear to have attributed in the main to lesser, spiteful beings, the demons and witches and fearsome monsters who inhabited this world rather than the heavenly one beyond it. The pagan Iranians also conceived, however, of a subterranean kingdom ruled over by "the god who is said to dwell beneath the earth",[420] who claimed as his subjects those spirits

[415] Op. cit., 203.

[416] For Thrita/Thraētaona see the following chapter. For such divinised concepts as the seasons and times of day etc., see Gray, *Foundations* under their various names. There is also the baffling figure of Dāmōiš Upamana, who accompanies Mithra in the form of a wild boar (*Yt.* 10.127). The meaning of his name is obscure, and he is little known outside the *yašts*. He is almost certainly therefore a pagan deity, whom Gershevitch (*AHM*, 166-9) has interpreted as the *alter ego* of Vərəthraghna; but it cannot be said that his arguments appear wholly conclusive. For other interpretations (none of them generally accepted) see Gershevitch, ibid.

[417] On them see above, pp. 53-5.

[418] Oldenberg, *Rel.*, 305-6.

[419] Ibid., 291.

[420] Herodotus, VII.114.

who at death failed to make their way up to the sunny abode of the Ahuras. This dread lord was perhaps the pagan Yima, for his Indian counterpart, Yama, is a lord of death, who seeks out those whose time has come and takes them to his dark realm.[421] Yama is popularly regarded with awe and dread; and probably in Iran also the ruler of the kingdom of the dead was feared and his messengers thought of with distress. There may be said, therefore, to have been a dualism with regard to the divine already in the pagan period: a theistic as distinct from an ethical dualism, with opposition between the gods of the sky, dispensing prosperity and happiness here and hereafter, and those of the underworld, to whom men sacrificed in order to avoid their dark and joyless abode.[422] Through Zoroaster's teaching this underworld came to be regarded as a place not merely of negations, but of punishment, in fact as hell; and the *daēvas* became, in their debasement, its inhabitants, to be execrated by all true followers of the prophet.

[421] On Yima/Yama see more fully in the following chapter.

[422] The theistic dualism latent in Rigvedic thought was stressed by W. Kirfel, *Die Kosmographie der Inder*, 13*-14*.

CHAPTER THREE

DEMONS AND EVIL-DOING, FABULOUS CREATURES, FIRST MEN AND HEROES

The Avesta shows that the pagan Iranians, like the Indians of old, felt their world to be inhabited by innumerable lesser spirits, some kindly but many malignant. Some of these evil powers sought to enter a man's body and harm him directly. Others lurked about his homestead and fields, ready to make him stumble and fall, or to harm his cattle or blight his crops; and beyond, the untamed forest and plain were full of menace.[1] Evil threatened everywhere, but could be warded off by proper precautions, such as banning formulas or propitiatory gifts; and some men were held to have acquired power over these dark forces, to compel them to serve their own ends. Hence the only word common to the Indo-Iranian tradition for such evil beings, namely *yātu*,[2] appears to denote primarily a class of demons, but came gradually in Iran to be used for the men who were able to control them, the sorcerers or magicians. Younger Avestan *yātu* (Persian *jādū*) already has sometimes this latter meaning,[3] for the gradual debasing in Zoroastrian usage of the word *daēva* from "god" to "false god" and thence to "demon" led to this becoming *the* term in Zoroastrianism for the powers of darkness. Nevertheless the original sense of *yātu* as an evil spirit always inheres in the word as it is used in the old Zoroastrian confession of faith, the *Fravarānē*,[4] and also when it is linked in denunciatory formulas with *pairikā*. This latter term denotes a class of female supernatural beings of malicious character, who seek to beguile and harm mankind—some of them witch-like in character, but in general more powerful than witches, as the *yātus* of old were more powerful than wizards.[5]

[1] On the awe felt by the Rigvedic Indians for forest and wasteland see H. W. Bailey, *Literatures of the East*, ed. E. Ceadel, 108-9. In general on Iranian demons see A. Christensen, *Essai sur la démonologie iranienne*, Copenhagen 1941. The demons in Zoroastrian tradition are listed by Gray, *Foundations*, 175-219.

[2] On the Indian *yātu* see, e.g., Oldenberg, *Rel.*, 265 ff. The Rigvedic and Avestan passages for *yātu* were brought together and discussed by Spiegel, *Die arische Periode*, 218-23. A similar semantic development (from evil being to the man having dealings with him) is widely found in other languages, e.g. English "warlock".

[3] E.g. *Yt.* 8.44: *nōiṯ yātavō pairikāsča, nōiṯ yātavō mašyānąm* "not devils and she-devils, not wizards among men."

[4] E.g. *Y.*12.4: *vī daēvāiš vī daēvavaṯbiš vī yātuš vī yātumaṯbiš* "(I forswear association with) false gods and the followers of false gods, devils and the followers of devils."

[5] In the Parsi Sanskrit translation of the Avesta *pairikā* is regularly rendered by *mahārākšasī* "great she-devil", see Gray, *Foundations*, 195. In the Middle Iranian Manichaean

These wicked beings could work evil at any time of day or night; but their powers were naturally thought to be greatest during the hours of darkness, and it was then that they did most harm, either through their own proper activity or in the service of wicked masters. One of the tasks of the god Tištrya was to combat in the night the malevolent *pairikās* of the sky. He "overcomes the *pairikās*, he conquers the *pairikās* who fall as shooting stars between earth and heaven" (*Yt.*8.8). Mithra too, who with the sun puts darkness to flight, is a "smiter down of *pairikās*" (*Yt.* 10.26). The *Vendidād* contains a banning formula against the *pairikā* "who approaches fire, water, earth, cattle and plants" (*Vd.*11.9). There is a *pairikā*, Dužyāiryā, who withers the crops and brings bad harvests (*Yt.* 8.51,54); and another called Mūš, the "Rat", who appears to be the demon-personification of rats and mice, and was probably conceived herself in rodent form.[6] That *pairikās* do sometimes appear as animals is further attested by the tale of the Kayanian hero Srit (Av. Thrita) who, wishing for death, sought out a *pairikā* living in a forest in the shape of a dog. He slashed at her with his sword, cutting her in two. Two dogs then leapt at him, and he went on striking and cleaving until there were a thousand dogs, which tore him to pieces.[7] Other *pairikās*, it seems, took on human form, and some made themselves enchantingly beautiful and so beguiled men to their harm (hence the *perīs* of later Persian folklore). In the Pahlavi translation of *Yt.*1.10 the word *pairikā* is glossed as meaning one who lures a man through enchantment to grievous sin;[8] and the hero Kərəsāspa is said to have been accompanied by the *pairikā* Khnąthaitī, evidently to his undoing (*Vd.*1.10).[9] That wicked men could sometimes learn to control *pairikās* for their own ends, as others mastered *yātus*, is suggested by the fact that Pitaona, whom Kərəsāspa slew, has the epithet "of many *pairikās*" (*aš.pairika-*, *Yt.*19.41).[10]

In Zoroastrian tradition there is a female spirit of evil, Nasuš, who is said to be "of all *dēvs* . . . the most bold, continuously polluting and fraudulent".[11] She is the demon of the Corpse, or Decay; and in the *Vendidād* she is described as a hideous mottled fly which comes from the north (the region of evil) and settles on the body, flitting from part to part.[12] She

texts, which reflect Zoroastrian usage of the early Sasanian period. *parīgān* are regularly linked with *dēvān* as evil beings.

[6] See *Y.* 16.8. and further Darmesteter, *ZA* I, 144 n. 15, Gray, *Foundations*, 210.

[7] *Zādspram* IV.25-6 (ed. BTA, 50-1, lxxxiv).

[8] See Bartholomae, *Air. Wb.* 864.

[9] See Darmesteter, *ZA* II, 10 n. 23.

[10] On the beguiling *perīs* in Persian epic see, briefly, Gray, *Foundations*, 196.

[11] J. J. Modi, *The Persian Farziāt-nāmeh*, Bombay 1924, text 10, transl. 19.

[12] *Vd.* 7.2-4.

is never called by the term *pairikā*, but is a *drug*, a feminine noun also used in the Avesta of the male demon Būiti,[13] and for a few other nameless fiends.[14] In the Rigveda, the cognate *druh* is also used of individual demons, male and female, as well as in the more general sense of "wrong, harm",[15] so this usage can safely be attributed to the pagan period in Iran, with the *yātu*, like the *pairikā*, being an evil being of lesser powers.

Although the *drug* Nasuš is conceived in insect form, and Tištrya's opponent Apaoša, "Dearth", appears, as we have seen, as a hairless, ugly horse,[16] other arch-fiends seem to have human shape, although probably all in some way hideous or deformed. The only demon who is named in the *Gāthās* (but without a generic term to describe him) is Aēšma, "Wrath";[17] and he has the standing epithet of *khrvīdru* "of bloody club" which suggests that he was pictured as a savage ruffian. Astō.vīdhātu, "Dissolution" or "Death", was imagined as having a noose in his hand with which to encircle his victim's throat;[18] and Būšyąstā, "Sloth", is called "long-handed", for she can stretch out to reach any man who has not the moral strength to resist her.[19]

However these demons were grouped or classified in pagan Iran, one distinction among them which strikes the modern student is that whereas some were held to assault man's physical being[20] or damage the material world around him, others laid siege to his moral nature. It seems unlikely, however, that this particular difference was clearly apprehended in pagan times. Hunger and Thirst, Sickness, Old Age and Decay were personified in the same way as Wrath or Envy or Sloth; and these personifications, like those of the "abstract "gods, were evidently conceived as distinct powers, with an existence and volition of their own. Thus a person in the grip of rage or hatred was regarded as the victim of an external force, no less than one who shook with fever or was palsied with age; and if his consequent actions were harmful and transgressed the right *(aša)*, this "sin" *(aēnah, agah)* was regarded as an evil into which the particular

[13] See Gray, *Foundations*, 203-4.

[14] See Bartholomae, *Air. Wb.* 780 s.v. *drug-*. In later times the word *daēva* was regularly used for male demons, *drug* (especially the inflected nom. sg. *drukhš*) for female ones.

[15] See Spiegel, *Arische Periode*, 215-7.

[16] See above, p. 74.

[17] *Y.* 29.2; 30.6; 48.12. See further Gray, *Foundations*, 185-7.

[18] See Gray, *Foundations*, 201-2. On the noose in connection with Indian Yama see Ch. 4, below.

[19] On Būšyąstā see Benveniste, *RHR* CXXX, 1945, 14-16.

[20] None of the names of individual demons of sickness occurs in the surviving Zoroastrian literature, but Benveniste has traced a probably ancient Iranian *Āla, demon of purpureal fever, who attacks the newly-delivered mother and seeks also to devour her child. See his article "Le dieu Ohrmazd et le démon Albasti", *JA* 1960, 65-74.

demon had trapped him, and from which he in his turn would suffer through the intervention of the gods. As in Vedic India "it is the objective fact of the sinful act which is apprehended" rather than that of the consenting will,[21] sin being more a religious than an ethical concept. A man could therefore hope to protect himself against sin (or free himself from it) by sacrifice and propitiatory prayers, in the same way that, if the gods were favourable, he could hope to banish illness or ill-luck by amulets, offerings and religious formulas. It was a matter of involving the greater, beneficent powers against the lesser, evil ones, and also of seeking to appease the latter so as to abate their malignancy. The help of the gods was in part to be sought by acting according to their will; but even if a man tried to walk carefully in the ways of *aša*, he might sin involuntarily through some unconscious trespass, or even through the acts of others. Thus if at the sacrifice the victim uttered a sound before it was slain, this for the Vedic Indian was a sin upon the man offering the sacrifice, for which atonement must be made through additional rites. Such concepts must in general have prevented a deepening of moral awareness, since the causes of wrong-doing were thus set on a plane with those of physical suffering and simple mischance, and much the same remedies were prescribed indiscriminately for all of them.[22]

As well as demons and other malicious spirits, the Indo-Iranians imagined the world as peopled with fabulous creatures, some beneficent, others ravening and destructive. There is no identity between the marvellous beasts of the two traditions, so imagination presumably went on working in this field after the two peoples had separated—as indeed it demonstrably did in Iran even after the time of the prophet.[23] Most of these strange creatures are mentioned in what seem to be old parts of the *yašts*, or in the supplementary texts to *Yasna Haptaŋhāiti* (*Y*.41), and belong evidently to the pre-Zoroastrian world. One among them which is still celebrated in Persian epic and folklore is "the great Saēna bird" (*Yt*.14.41), the *Saēna mərəgha (*Pahlavi *Sēn murw*, Persian *Sīmurg)*, conceived, it seems, as a huge falcon, which has its perch on the Tree of All Seeds or of All

[21] Oldenberg, *Rel.*, 295. Cf. Gonda, *Rel. Indiens*, 40; E. W. Hopkins, *Ethics of India*, New Haven 1924, 25 ff.; S. Rodhe, *Deliver us from evil*, 135 ff. For the involuntary sin committed by the Iranian Kərəsāspa against fire see further below.

[22] In general on early concepts of sin see R. Otto, *Sünde und Urschuld und andere Aufsätze zur Theologie*, Munich 1932; G. Mensching, *Die Idee der Sünde, Ihre Entwicklung in den Hochreligionen des Orients und Occidents*, Leipzig 1931.

[23] Cf. the curious, apparently late, legend of Gōpatšāh, "who from foot to the middle of the body is an ox, and from the middle of the body above is a man", on which see Bailey, *BSOS* VI, 1932, 950-3. On Gōpatšāh's ritual activity at the sea shore see Boyce, *JRAS* 1966, 117.

Healing (*Yt*.12.17), and which (the Pahlavi texts relate) by its great weight and the beating of its wings breaks the twigs of this tree and scatters its seeds, which wind and rain then carry over the earth.[24] It is also said to suckle its young[25], and in the Persian epic the tale is told of how it reared the hero Zāl, abandoned in infancy, in its own nest.[26]

The Tree of All Seeds on which the Saēna nests grows in the middle of the sea Vourukaša (*Yt*.12.17); and round it, the Pahlavi books relate, there swims perpetually the Kara fish, of which the Avesta records that it has the sharpest perceptions, and even in the depths of the waters can perceive a ripple as fine as a hair (*Yt*.14.29).[27] Its task is to ward off all harmful creatures, and especially frogs, which seek to gnaw at the roots of the life-giving tree.[28]

There is also "the ass which is righteous *(ašavan)* and stands in the middle of the sea Vourukaša" (*Y*.41.28), or at times strides purposefully around it.[29] According to the Pahlavi books, this creature has three legs, six eyes and nine mouths, and is white of body, with a golden horn upon its head. When it stales, it destroys all harmful creatures within the waters, for it feeds on spiritual *(mēnōg)* food only, and all things about it are pure. Ambergris is its dung. With it in *Y*.42 is reverenced the Vāsī Pančā.sadvarā (*Y*.42.4), which according to the *Bundahišn* lives likewise in the sea Vourukaša. This appears to be a kind of leviathan, and is so huge that if it were to rush swiftly along from sunrise to sunset it still would not have covered as much ground as the length of its own body; and it rules over all denizens of the waters.[30]

Another vast creature, known only from the Pahlavi books, is the bull Hadhayans, also called Srīsōk, which is so large that it alone in ancient days could pass over the barriers of water and mountain and forest that separate the seven regions of the earth, and it carried men on its back from one to another.[31] Hadhayans appears to be originally quite distinct from

[24] See *Zādspram* III. 39 (ed. BTA, 30, lxxvii); *Mēnōg ī Khrad* LXII.37-9 (ed. West, text 57, transl. 186), and further in Ch. 5, below.

[25] *Great Bundahišn* XIII.23 (BTA, 123).

[26] *Shāhnāma*, Tehran ed. (pub. 1935-1936), I 133-4; transl. Warner, I 241-2. Here the Sīmurg is represented as a bird of prey, which rears the baby on blood instead of milk.

[27] The Kara fish is mentioned also in *Vd*. 19.42.

[28] See *GBd*. XXIVa (BTA, 193).

[29] See *GBd*. XXIVd (BTA, 196-7). Nyberg, *Rel.* 285, argued, against the tradition, that Khara ("ass") here was originally a "Turanian divinity" rather than a fabulous creature.

[30] See *GBd*. XXIVb (BTA, 193). Nyberg, ibid., again took the Vāsī for a divinity; and W. Wust, *ARW* XXXVI, 1940, 250 ff. understood it to be a "pointed blade" or "dagger", worshipped as a symbol of lordship.

[31] See *GBd*. XIII. 36 (BTA, 127); XVIII.9 (BTA, 159), XXIV.22 (BTA, 197). On the name Hadhayans see West, *SBE* V, 69 n. 3; Christensen, *Les types du premier homme.. dans l'histoire légendaire des Iraniens*, Stockholm 1917, I 147.

the Uniquely-created Bull *(Gav aēvō.dāta)*, which was the product, it seems, of learned cosmogonic speculation.

There were other fabulous birds as well as the Saēna, two of which are regarded as particularly holy in Zoroastrian tradition. One, Karšiptar, the "swiftly flying",[32] is said to have spread the prophet's teachings in Yima's underground kingdom (*Vd.*2.42).[33] Another, Ašō.zušta, "Being loved of *aša*", according to the Pahlavi books utters holy words *(Avesta)* in its own tongue, thus causing devils to flee away even from barren places.[34] The parings of human nails should be dedicated to this bird, so that it can guard them and prevent them being turned into hostile weapons by demons (*Vd.*17.9). Tradition identifies Ašō.zušta as the owl, vigilant against *dēvs* at the time of their greatest activity, night;[35] and the practice of dedicating nail-parings to it by uttering the appropriate words from the *Vendidād* is still observed by strictly orthodox Zoroastrians. Yet another legendary bird, patriotic rather than holy, is the Čamrūš, whom we have already met in the myth of Apąm Napāt, pecking up non-Iranians as if they were grain. It is said to be the worthiest of birds after the Saēna,[36] which it helps in the yearly task of distributing seeds from the Tree of All Healing.[37]

These and other beneficent birds and beasts of fable oppose the demons and goblins which vex man in malice, and also the noxious creatures that inhabit the world, for which the generic Avestan term is *khrafstra*.[38] For the Iranians of old, who had naturally an anthropocentric view of life, *khrafstra* included all creatures that were harmful to man, and to his domestic animals and crops. The term thus covered all beasts of prey and hungry rodents, as well as insects such as locust and wasp and thieving ant. It also included those creatures which, though not harmful, were repulsive to man, such as beetles and spiders, lizards and tortoises. Among

[32] See Bartholomae, *Air. Wb.* 458.

[33] Cf. *GBd.* XXIVg (BTA, 199).

[34] *GBd.* XXIVh (BTA, 199). The name Irdasušda, which occurs among the Elamite tablets at Persepolis, is the equivalent of Av. *ašō. zušta*, see Benveniste, *Titres et noms propres*, 84.

[35] For references see Bartholomae, *Air. Wb.* 259.

[36] *GBd.* XVIIa (BTA, 157). Otherwise *GBd.* XVII.11 (BTA, 155), where the Karšiptar is said to be the chief of birds.

[37] *Mēnōg ī Khrad* LXII.40-2 (West, text 57, transl. 186).

[38] The word occurs once in the *Gāthās*, *Y.*28.5, where it has been variously interpreted. According to some, the prophet used it there pejoratively for "roving enemies of the faith... robber bands" (see Bartholomae, *Air. Wb.* 538). Others see in it a reference to Ahrimanic creatures whom he was banning by his *mąthras* from the sanctified place of worship, the *pāvi*, and hence symbolically from the whole good creation (see Humbach, *Die Gathas* II, 9-10). Bailey (*Henning Mem. Vol.*, 25-8) brought together a number of Pahlavi passages concerning *khrafstra*, and suggested a derivation of the word from an IE verbal base **skrep-* meaning "bite, sting, pierce".

these *khrafstras* the frog for some reason was regarded as the epitome of evil,[39] and, as we have seen, it was chiefly against frogs that the Kara fish protected the life-giving Tree of All Seeds. The cat, too, although the enemy of rats and mice, was itself held to be a *khrafstra*, like its larger relatives the lion and tiger.[40] This was presumably because it is by preference a creature of the night, and even when domesticated was regarded by Zoroastrians as wayward and treacherous in contrast with the loyal dog. The nomad Iranians could have known it only as a wild animal, for plainly the cat did not dwell in their tents, and unlike the dog had no place in their social or religious traditions.

There were also fabulous *khrafstra*, great monsters which were opposed not by other fabulous beasts, but by heroes of the human race. These naturally included serpents or dragons, *aži*, of which the most famed and formidable, at least in the later tradition, was Aži Dahāka, three-headed and man-devouring.[41] Another huge dragon, Aži Sruvara, was horned and yellowy-green of body, consumed horses and men, and laid waste the land with its venom.[42] There was also the yellow-heeled Gandarəwa, which troubled the waters of the sea Vourukaša;[43] and the stony-handed Snāvidhka, who was conceived apparently in semi-human shape, an Iranian Titan; for (in the Zoroastrian version of his legend) he boasted superbly that when he was full-grown he would summon the spirit of good from Paradise, and the spirit of evil from Hell, and harness them both to pull his chariot.[44] There was moreover a huge evil bird, Kamak,[45] and other hideous and horrible creatures who sought to destroy mankind and were themselves destroyed by valiant Iranians; for all these monsters were terrestial creatures, inhabitants of this world.[46] There is no trace in

[39] See *Vd.* 5.36; Darmesteter, *ZA* II, 213 n. 15.

[40] See Darmesteter, ibid., 212 n. 13; *Rivāyats*, ed. Unvala, I 276.16-277.5, transl. Dhabhar, 270. The cherished "Persian" cat belongs to Muslim Iran, see further in Vol. III.

[41] On Aži Dahāka in the Avesta and in later literature see Christensen, *Démonologie*, 20-4.

[42] *Yt.* 19.40, see Christensen, ibid., 17-18 and cf. *Dādestān ī dinīg*, *Purs.* 71.4 (transl. West, *SBE* XVIII, 217). It is suggested that as Aži Višāpa, the "dragon with poisonous slaver", this monster left its trace in the *višaps* of Armenian legend, see Benveniste, "L'origine du *višap* armenien", *Rev. Ét. Arméniennes* VII, 1927, 7-91.

[43] *Yt.* 5.38, 19.41, see Christensen, op. cit., 18-20. The Iranian Gandarəwa has, it seems, a counterpart in the Vedic Gandharva, a beneficent creature who inhabits the region of air and guards the heavenly *soma*, and who in later Indian mythology developed into a whole class of heavenly beings, who (*pace* Dumézil and his followers) have nothing but the name in common with the Iranian monster, see Geiger, *Die Aməša Spəntas*, 46.

[44] *Yt.* 19.43-44. See Christensen, op. cit., 20.

[45] See Darmesteter, *ZA* II, 626 n. 58.

[46] On another group of terrestrial dragons, namely the *višāpa*, see above, n. 42; and on the survival in Shughni of a word apparently connected with Vedic *Śuśna-*, the "Hisser", see Morgenstierne, "An ancient Indo-Iranian word for dragon", *J. M. Unvala Mem. Vol.*, Bombay 1964, 95-8.

Iranian tradition of a dragon such as the Indian Vṛtra (a late concept, it seems[47]), who guards the cosmic waters and is defeated by the gods themselves.

A number of great heroes are celebrated in the Avesta, and it appears that tales preserved by various individual families and tribes concerning their own ancestral figures were blended there with common traditions about "culture heroes" and "first men". A few such tales and traditions evidently go back to the Indo-Iranian period, being known from the Vedas as well as the Avesta; but in each of these cases there are striking differences between the Indian and Iranian traditions. The most prominent and detailed of these ancient legends is that concerning Yima Khšaēta, "king Yima",[48] who as Jamšēd still dominates Persian story-telling. The Avestan Yima, son of Vīvaŋhvant, appears in the Vedas as Yama, son of Vivasvant. The Vedic Yama is the first man to have lived on earth and to have died. He therefore found for others the path to the subterranean kingdom of the dead, where in popular belief he reigns as a dread figure who in a large measure has been assimilated to Death himself, all-powerful and pitiless.[49] As such he has traits that in Iran belong to Vayu as god of death, or to Astō.vīdhātu, demon of dissolution. His is a call that all must heed when their time comes; and he sends his servants to carry off the doomed man "haltered by the neck" *(grīvabaddham)*[50], as Astō.vīdhātu snares his victims with a noose. His power extends over all the dead except those who succeed in attaining Paradise on high, for "in heaven Yama is not".[51] The spirits of the dead travel to his realm by a downward path; but in *RV*.10.14.2 this gloomy region is called *gavyuti* "cattle-pasture", an expression which has been connected with Yima's constant epithet of *hvąthwa* "having good herds".[52] However, in the aristocratic tradition of the Rigveda Yama's place is *also* set in Paradise above (e.g. *RV*.10.14.8), where he rules in happiness over the blessed dead.[53]

In the Avesta the legends concerning Yima are more complex, and need

[47] See above, p. 64.

[48] On the title *khšaēta* see above, p. 69 n. 311.

[49] On this aspect of Yama see in detail E. Arbman, *ARW* XXV, 1927, 380-4. It emerges from the later Vedas and the Brāhmaṇas rather than the Rigveda (on whose concept of Yama as mild king of the blessed in Paradise see further below). Arbman appears right when he argues (*ARW* XXVI, 1928, 219, 222-4) that it is the later texts which in fact preserve the older concept of Yama, which persisted (and persists) despite the more hopeful myth of the Rigveda.

[50] See Arbman, *ARW* XXV, 382.

[51] Ibid., 383 (citing the *Kāṭhaka Upaniṣad*).

[52] See P. Thieme, *Studien zur idg. Wortkunde u. Religionsgeschichte*, 47-8, 50. This region receives not only human souls but also those of duly sacrificed animals, see further in Ch. 4.

[53] See further below.

considerable unravelling[54]. If this is done, however, the same basic components are found as in the Indian version. According to the second chapter of the *Vendidād*, Yima "of the good herds" ruled over all the world in the beginning, and in his kingdom there was no cold wind or hot, no sickness or death. After 300 years earth became too full of cattle and men, dogs, birds and red glowing fires; and he smote it with golden goad and whip, and it became broader by one third. After the 600th year of his rule he enlarged it again, and once more after the 900th. Thereafter (if one combines this *Vendidād* account with references in the *Gāthās* and the ancient *Zam Yašt*) it seems that Yima sinned. Zoroaster himself alludes, though obscurely, to Yima deceiving the people, apparently in some way connected with the bull-sacrifice.[55] In *Yt*.19.33 it is said that Yima allowed himself to entertain a lie in his mind, so that Khvarənah, the divine Fortune, left him and the days of his glory were ended. In the Pahlavi texts and Persian epic it is said that "Jam" sinned through arrogance, claiming that he himself was God.[56] Presumably this is the legend alluded to in both *Yt*.19 (his claim being the "lie" spoken of there) and the *Gāthās*[57] —Yima having perhaps instituted a sacrifice to himself, as if he were indeed divine. This story of his fall from grace (for which there is no Indian parallel) was presumably evolved by priests of the ethical Ahuric cult to account in moral terms for death coming to Yima; for according to the version of the legend in the *Shāhnāma* Jamšēd died because he thus erred. Despite this development of his story Yima Khšaēta, as Jamšēd, remains the greatest hero of Iranian tradition, the ideal of kingly power

[54] The chief Avestan passages concerning Yima are *Vd*. 2; *Y*. 9.4-5; *Yt*. 5.25-6; 15. 15-6; 17.28-31; 19.36-8. The Yima legend has been illuminatingly discussed by Lommel in the appendix to his *Yäšt's*, 196-207, where he refers to interesting comparisons with Vedic material made by J. Hertel, *Himmelstore im Veda und Avesta*, 1924, 23 ff. For references to earlier discussions see Gray, *Foundations*, 14 n. 1; Geiger, *Amša Spəntas*, 44-56; Christensen, *Le premier homme*, II, passim. In recent years a good deal has been written (by S. Hartman, G. Widengren, R. C. Zaehner and others) on a supposed connection between, or even identification of, Yima and Mithra. This appears a wholly baseless hypothesis, originating largely in misunderstandings of Pahlavi and Persian texts. Against Zaehner's arguments see in detail Duchesne-Guillemin, *IIJ* VII, 1964, 200-2; against those of Hartman, Boyce, *BSOAS* XVII, 1955, 174-6, and see further below, p. 96 n. 75.

[55] *Y*. 32.8. On this verse see Bartholomae, *Air. Wb*. 1866-7; Molé, *Culte*, 221 ff. It is, however, extremely obscure, and Humbach, *Die Gathas* I, 97, Lentz, *A Locust's Leg, Studies in honour of S. H. Taqizadeh*, 132, translate in a way which contains no reference at all to either bull or sacrifice. Formerly, when it was generally thought that the blood sacrifice was abhorred by Zoroastrians, it was supposed that Yima's sin lay in instituting or practising this rite; but this interpretation is no longer tenable. (On the Zoroastrian doctrine concerning animal sacrifice see below, Ch. 8.)

[56] See notably *Pahl. Riv. Dd*. XXXI.a.10 (ed. Dhabhar, 101-2), where Jam is represented as having claimed that he had created all the seven creations, sky, water, earth, plants, animals and man, thereby speaking a lie. See also the *Shāhnāma*, Tehran ed., I 26-7, transl. Warner, I 134.

[57] On this see Lentz, art. cit.

and splendour, the "most glorious of mortals". There are, moreover, traces in the Iranian tradition, as in the Indian one, of the dead king being regarded as lord of the departed in Paradise on high. Thus in the legend of the birth of Zoroaster it is said that the prophet's spirit or *fravaši*, which had been dwelling with the Immortals, was led to the boundary of Paradise by Nairyō.saŋha, the divine messenger, and by Yima;[58] from which it would appear that Yima was regarded as having his abode in Heaven, with authority there over souls. As for the evidently older belief that he ruled an underworld kingdom of the dead, it is possible, as we have seen, that the pagan Yima is to be identified with "the god who is supposed to dwell beneath the earth",[59], who was propitiated by the ancient Persians. (That the hero-king was known to them as well as to the Avestan people is proved by the occurrence of the proper names Yamakka, Yamakšedda at Persepolis.[60]) This part of the ancient legend must have been impossible to reconcile with Zoroastrian doctrines, however, since in Zoroaster's teachings this subterranean place had become identified with Hell, and its ruler was the malignant being who was hostile to Ahura Mazdā. As such it could no longer be the abode of king Yima; and possibly for this reason a particular development of his legend took place in Iran, recorded only in the *Vendidād*. Here there is no reference to Yima's sin and consequent death. Instead it is said that when he had reigned for 1000 years the gods came to an assembly with him and the best of the men whom he ruled; and they[61] told him that winters were about to come upon the "bad corporeal world", bringing cruel frosts and snow on mountain and plain. When the snow melted it would carry away stores of fodder, so that cattle would starve and it would be a wonder thereafter to see the footprint of a sheep.[62] Yima was accordingly to build a *var* beneath the earth,[63] and to bring into it pairs of the best and finest men and women, and the best and finest animals, and the seeds of all the biggest and most fragrant plants, and also of the most edible and delicious ones. No people might enter there who had either physical or mental defects.[64] The *var* was to be divided into three parts (which have been taken to represent the three divisions of Iranian society[65]). Water flows there, and there is always

[58] See further below, Ch. 11.
[59] Herodotus, VII.114, see further below, Ch. 4.
[60] See Benveniste, *Titres et noms propres*, 96.
[61] In the Zoroastrian version it is naturally Ahura Mazdā who speaks.
[62] *Vd.* 2. 20-4.
[63] On the *var* being underground see Lommel, *Yášt's*, 200-1 with Pahlavi references.
[64] *Vd.* 2.25-8.
[65] See Darmesteter, *ZA* II, 27 n. 53; Benveniste, *JA* 1932, 119-21. Attempts were once made to compare the *var* with what were thought to be huge communal dwellings of the

pasture, green and never exhausted[66]. This underground place has its own lights, which resemble the sun and moon and stars, and there a year passes as a day.[67] To each couple a child is born every 40 years,[68] and they live the happiest of lives under Yima's rule.

The redaction in which the *Vendidād* survives is late (assigned usually to the Parthian period); and it is therefore perfectly possible that, as has been suggested, this part of the legend is also late, and shaped under foreign influence—that it owes its inspiration to Mesopotamian tradition of the great flood which afflicted the "bad corporeal world" (in itself a wholly unZoroastrian conception).[69] The shape and nature of Yima's *var* have always been a puzzle; but if this structure derives from a floating ark, and has been awkwardly adapted to Iranian legend, much that is perplexing becomes less so. The flood itself appears to have been transformed into the sort of disaster conceivable on the Iranian plateau; and placing the *var* beneath the ground keeps this new version of Yima's fate in accord with the ancient belief that he was lord of the underworld, where he welcomed the dead to "cattle pastures", the Elysian fields of Iran. According to the *Vendidād*, however, Yima does not die, but becomes one of those great ones who pass living into the hereafter (the flood story requiring the survival of its hero). Like Arthur in Avalon, or Frederick Barbarossa in his mountain cave, the Iranian king is said to have withdrawn into a hidden place, where he exists tranquilly through the present sorry times. There is no suggestion, moreover, that other men on dying might find their way to Yima's *var*, to which entry was possible but once, to escape the great disaster. The *Vendidād* legend appears thus to be an awkward adaptation of an alien tradition, at odds with both the other Iranian sources and the Indian ones. In time it came to be associated with the developed apocalyptic tradition, the opening of Yima's *var* being one of the glorious events that will take place at the end of the eleventh millennium.[70] The legend appears thus as a part of Zoroastrian scholastic learning, and it never entered, apparently, into popular tradition, for it is the older story of Yima's sin and death which survives in the *Book of Kings*.

Although in the existing texts Yama/Yima is represented as the ruler,

7th century B.C. excavated in Khwarezmia; but doubt has since been thrown on the nature of these remains, see Frumkin, *Archaeology in Soviet Central Asia*, 89.
[66] *Vd.* 2. 26.
[67] *Vd.* 2. 40.
[68] *Vd.* 2. 41. (The figure 40 is generally used in Iran for a vague large number.)
[69] The connection with the story of Gilgamesh and other Mesopotamian legends was made by Herzfeld, *Zoroaster* I, 331-9, who assumed that this was the result of influences on the Yima legend as early as the Medean period.
[70] See further below, Ch. 11.

not progenitor, of the human race, the Vedas know a consort for him, namely his twin sister Yamī, by whom he has children. Her existence is not mentioned in the Avesta[71]; but there is an Avestan common noun meaning (like Skt. *yama*) "twin", and later forms of this word occur in Middle Iranian languages. The Pahlavi tradition records, moreover, a female Yimak, and it seems possible that she belongs to the old Indo-Iranian legend.[72] However this may be, it seems inevitable that with priestly speculation about the origins of mankind Yima, the first ruler, should have been drawn into association with the first man.

In Indian tradition this is Manu, who, like Yama, is described as the son of Vivasvant, and who in some respects acts as the double of the legendary king.[73] In Iran the name of Manu is preserved only in the compound proper name Manuš.čithra "Of the race of Manu" (*Yt.*13.131),[74] and in that of Manušag, who in the Pahlavi books appears as sister of Manuščihr. These two are represented there as the descendants of Yim and Yimag, who are themselves made the descendants, at seven removes, of Mašya and Mašyānag, the Iranian first man and his wife;[75] but presumably the originally Iranian Mašya represented the same concept as the Indian Manu (the two words meaning "mortal" and "man" respectively). According to Iranian legend Mašya and his wife came into the world from a plant, a rhubarb stalk that grew and divided and developed into separate human beings.[76] These two, in the Zoroastrian form of the legend, first reverenced Ahura Mazdā, but were then seduced by the *daēvas* and gave them honour instead.[77] Because of this sin it was fifty years before

[71] It has been suggested that in *Y.*30.3 the dual *yā yāmā* "the twins" should in fact be taken as referring specifically to Yima and his sister, see Lentz, art. cit., 132-3; but this interpretation appears rather forced. Against it see Gershevitch, *JNES* XXIII, 1964, 32-3.

[72] See Geiger, *Aməša Spəntas*, 52. The Pahlavi passages are brought together by Christensen, *Le premier homme* II, 21 ff.

[73] See, e.g., Bergaigne, *La religion védique*, I 88; Oldenberg, *Rel.* 281; Keith, *Rel. and phil.* 112-3, 229.

[74] This sole occurrence of the name Manuš.čithra in the Avesta is with the adjective Airyāva. It was interpreted by Bartholomae, *Air. Wb.* 1135, as that of a Zoroastrian believer, but by Darmesteter (*ZA* II, 549 n. 279) and others as that of the ancient legendary figure. The *fravaši* of Thraētaona is reverenced in the same verse, (although with others intervening), and that of Yima in the preceding one.—On Airyāva see Bartholomae, *Air. Wb.* 199; Nyberg, *Rel.*, 257-8, 293; Christensen, *Études sur le zoroastrisme de la Perse antique*, Copenhagen 1923, 23.

[75] On the variant forms of their names see Christensen, *Le premier homme*, I, 9-10. It is one of the Pahlavi forms ("mahl", written as *mhl/mhr*) which has been confused by some with "Mihr", wild deductions being drawn from this (see above, p. 93 n. 54). Virtually all the texts relating to this first human pair have been brought together by Christensen, *Le premier homme* I, 13 ff.

[76] *GBd.* XIV. 6-10 (*BTA*, 127-9).

[77] *GBd.* XIV. 14-15 (BTA, 129-31).

they had children, twins, whom they devoured.[78] But Ahura Mazdā then intervened,[79] and they bore other twin children through whom the world became peopled. The fact that the name Yima seems to have meant "twin" suggests variations here on an ancient legend concerning the origins of man.

Further, the rhubarb plant from which Mašya and Mašyānag grew is said in the Pahlavi books to have sprung from the seed of Gayōmard, Av. Gayō.marətan, "Mortal Life".[80] He too is a mythical First Man, who is probably to be identified with the Vedic Mārtāṇḍa "Mortal Seed", and therefore must also be regarded as of Indo-Iranian origin. In the Avesta and Pahlavi tradition he is regularly associated with the Uniquely-created Bull, and both appear to belong to the sphere of priestly cosmogonic speculation. They will be considered together therefore in a later chapter.[81]

As we have seen, the Vedas and Avesta agree about the name of Yama/Yima's father (illogical though it may be for a "first man" to have one). They also concur on his activity, for in Indian tradition Vivasvant is the first sacrificer. One term for the place of sacrifice is accordingly the "place of Vivasvant", and the name Vivasvant can be used honorifically for the priest who officiates there.[82] In Iran Vīvaŋhvant was the first mortal to press the *haoma*. In reward for this the god Haoma granted him the boon of an illustrious son, Yima.[83] (To this day, Zoroastrian women pray to Hōm if they desire sons who will be famous.[84]) According to *Y.* 9 the second mortal to press *haoma* was Āthwya, to whom therefore was born the mighty Thraētaona; and the third was Thrita, who begot two sons, Urvākhšaya, a law-giver,[85] and Kərəsāspa, one of the greatest of Avestan heroes. With these names it seems that we pass from the world of myth into that of heroic saga; but there are a number of problems involved here also. Thus the name of the third *haoma*-presser, Thrita, means with suspicious aptness the "Third One". Of him, "the most beneficent of the Sāmas" (*Y.*9.11), we are told that he was the first and greatest of healers

[78] *GBd.* XIV. 31 (BTA, 133).

[79] *GBd.* XIV. 31-5 (BTA, 133).

[80] *GBd.* XIV. 5-6 (BTA, 127-8).

[81] See Ch. 5, below.

[82] See Oldenberg, *Rel.*, 281-2; Hillebrandt, *Ved. Mythologie* II, 309.

[83] *Y.* 9.4.

[84] See Boyce, *Henning Memorial Vol.*, 64.

[85] It has been suggested that his name should be interpreted as "king of Urvā", see Darmesteter, *ZA* II, 586 n. 18; Wikander, *Vayu*, 58; Christensen, *Le premier chapitre du Vd.*, 34; but if this is so, and the "name" is anciently his, then the location of this Urvā would be quite unknown.

(*Vd*.20.2); but in the *Farvardīn Yašt*, v.131, it is Thraētaona, "son of the house of Āthwya" who is invoked for warding off fevers and maladies, and in living Zoroastrian observance it is he who, as King Frēdōn (Farīdūn), is turned to for help, through religious services, prayers and amulets, to keep away or cure sickness.

The suspicion that Thraētaona and Thrita were originally in some way closely associated (if not identical)[86] is strengthened by the fact that the Vedas know a Trita Āptya, a mythical sacrificer who was the first to prepare *soma*.[87] Despite phonetic difficulties it has been suggested that Āptya and Āthwya stem from a common original, namely an Indo-Iranian *Ātpi̯as, which yielded Av. Āthwya by normal development, whereas Vedic Āptyás appears to have been influenced by popular etymologizing, through which the name came to be associated with *āp-* "water".[88] It is undeniable that a great feat performed by Thraētaona Āthwya is strikingly similar to one achieved by Trita Āptya. The Iranian hero fights the dragon Aži Dahāka, serpent-bodied, three-headed and six-eyed. The Indian Trita overcomes the dragon Viśvarūpa, who likewise is serpent-bodied, three-headed and six-eyed. There is this difference, that Aži Dahāka, like all other Iranian monsters, is a terrestrial beast which ravages this earth, whereas Viśvarūpa is conceived as a celestial one; but it seems that in Vedic tradition Trita's deed became associated with Indra's slaying of Vṛtra, having possibly even provided the heroic prototype for this later myth, and then become contaminated by it. In India Trita himself appears as a god, and the meaning of his name[89] is emphasised by the evolution of two other Āptyas, Ekata and Dvita (the First and Second). Popular etymology having connected the "family" name

[86] See Spiegel, *Arische Periode*, 262 ff.; Darmesteter, *ZA* II, 549 n. 275; Geiger, *Aməša Spəntas*, 57 ff.

[87] On Trita see K. Rönnow, *Trita Āptya, eine vedische Gottheit*, Uppsala 1927, with full analytical bibliography, v-xx; R. Otto, *Das Gefuhl des Überweltlichen*, Munich 1932, 69 ff.

[88] See Bartholomae, *Arische Forschungen* I, 8 ff.; *IF* I, 180; Gershevitch, *Studia.. A. Pagliaro oblata* II, 188-9. The identity of the names was earlier insisted upon by Spiegel, *Arische Periode*, 270, and has been widely accepted by Iranists.

[89] Whether the proper name Thrita/Trita originally meant "Third" or was merely interpreted as having this meaning because it was a homonym of the ordinal number has been much discussed; see Rönnow, op. cit., xx-xxvii. In Zoroastrian tradition other Thrita's are known: a Thrita, son of Sāyuždrī (*Yt*. 5.72; 13.113); and a Thrita (Pahlavi Srit) who was a warrior at the time of Vištāspa's ancestor, Kavi Usan, and met his death from the dog-*pairikā*, as we have seen above. (His story is given more fully by Christensen, *Les Kayanides*, 76-8). He is possibly to be identified with the warrior "Srit of the *Vīsraps" whose *fravaši*, according to the *Dinkard* (ed. Sanjana, Vol. XIV, VII.5.2-11, Madan, 646.17 f., see West, *SBE* XLVII, 77-80), was released from heaven and, coming to Vištāspa, bestowed a marvellous chariot on him, that needed no driver. The Srit of the time of Kavi Usan is said to have been a seventh son, which, if true, would make it the less likely that the name originally meant "The Third".

with "water", the trio were held to have sprung from Agni's spittle. They follow Indra, as Brahmans follow a king, and take upon themselves his sin of killing the dragon, a sin which is washed away from them at each sacrifice with the pouring out of water.[90] They are claimed as divine ancestors by the historical clan of the Āptyas; and opinion among Vedic scholars is divided as to whether the original Trita Āptya was a god from whom a priestly family chose to claim descent,[91] or a mortal hero, whom reverence by his descendants elevated to the dignity of a divine being.[92] The Iranian tradition undoubtedly supports the latter interpretation, for there Thrita and Thraētaona are alike regarded as human beings, and it is not a divine Thraētaona who is invoked for help but his soul, his *fravaši*, regarded as existing after his death here on earth.

In the Vedas there is mention once (*RV*1.158.5) of a Traitana, who appears obscurely, in a context which does not suggest any connection with the Avestan Thraētaona. On the basis of the existing data one can hardly hope, therefore, to reach certain conclusions; but the following interpretation of the Iranian evidence seems possible, and can be harmonised with the Vedic material on the assumption that there were secondary developments and assimilations in India: in the remote past there existed two great men of the house of *Ātpi̯as, one famous as a warrior, the other as a physician. The traditions concerning them became blended and confused, and ultimately in Iran only Thraētaona was widely celebrated, as warrior and physician (a double role already attributed to him in *Yt*.13.131), whereas in India it was Trita alone who remained prominent. In *Y*. 9, in the enumeration of *haoma*-sacrificers, the fact that Thrita's name means "third" (or is a homonym of the word for "third") evidently led to his being separated from his kinsman Thraētaona and assigned the place of the third presser of *haoma*, namely Sāma, progenitor of Kərəsāspa.[93] The link between Kərəsāspa and Thrita exists only here. Elsewhere the former is known not as a son of Thrita but as a descendant of Sāma, being famed throughout Iran as Sāma Kərəsāspa, Sāmān

[90] See Hillebrandt, *Ved. Mythologie* II, 308. On Trita as the source of sin among men ("the gods remove the sin committed by them on Tṛta, who lets it go on to humans") see Rodhe, *Deliver us from evil*, 149-50.

[91] This appears the commoner view among Vedic scholars. Rönnow regarded Trita as a divine being connected with water and *soma*; Macdonell saw in him a god of lightning, Bloomfield the scapegoat of the gods, whereas Gonda (*Rel. Indiens* I, 58) considers him an ancient divinity of Indra-type, who became largely overshadowed by the greater god. In general not much attention has been paid to the Iranian evidence in reaching any of these conclusions.

[92] See Hillebrandt, *Ved. Mythologie* II, 310.

[93] This explanation was first proposed by Geiger, *Aməša Spəntas*, 58-9.

Karšāsp. According to this interpretation Thrita and Thraētaona, brothers, were both mortal men.

The existence of the Vedic parallels shows that the *Ātpiias must have lived in the Indo-Iranian period, presumably, that is, some time before at least the second millennium B.C.; and it is small wonder that with the passage of so many centuries they should have become almost (or, in India, entirely) superhuman figures,[94] and their deeds wholly marvellous. Thraētaona is celebrated in Iran not only for a miraculous gift of healing, but also for performing two fabulous feats. One is the defeat of Aži Dahāka, whom, however, he did not slay but fettered, to live captive until the end of the world, when he will break free for the last great battle. (Whether this is an ancient feature of the story, to be linked with Norse and other myths of the bound monster and the end of the world, or a late development of Zoroastrian eschatology, is discussed in another chapter[95]). The other stupendous feat attributed to Thraētaona relates to one Pāurva, the "wise steersman", whom he flung into the air so fiercely that he sped across the sky for three days and nights, until Arədvī heard his prayer and rescued him, seizing him by the arms and bringing him safely down to earth, there to fulfil his vow of making 1000 libations to her at the river Raŋha (*Yt.*5.61-5). The fact that the goddess succoured him suggests that Pāurva was not a wicked person, so this wonderful tale is probably an epic exaggeration of an incident in an actual fight between two warriors of old. (Minstrel-poets in general were reasonably chivalrous, and not given to blackening unduly a hero's mortal foes.[96])

There is no indication from external sources as to when the other great Avestan hero, Kərəsāspa, lived—no Indian parallels to assign him to remote antiquity, no link with any person known to history to set him in a later age. The facts, however, that many more stories are told of him than of Thraētaona, and that as well as accomplishing marvellous feats he is also celebrated in ordinary combat, suggest that he lived considerably later than the Āthwyas;[97] and it has been suggested that the Gudha, the

[94] The genealogy provided for Thraētaona in *GBd.* XXXV.8 (BTA, 293-5) has, as West remarked (*SBE* V, 132 n. 8), a highly artificial appearance and seems devised simply to link him and his father through a suitable number of generations with Yima in the Zoroastrian "history" of the world.

[95] See p. 283, below. The antiquity of the Scandinavian doctrine of the end of the world itself remains doubtful, see, e.g. Chadwick, *Cult of Othin*, 13.

[96] Thus in the *yašts* (in passages probably representing indirectly a heroic tradition) the warrior-foes of the "Airyas" themselves petition the gods; and although their petitions are necessarily rejected, they still receive the same sort of complimentary epithets as the Airya heroes, e.g. the "valiant sons of Vaēsaka" *Yt.* 5.57. (On the special case of the Tūirya Fraŋrasyan see further below.)

[97] On the legend of Kərəsāspa as it is preserved in the Avesta, and in Pahlavi and

tributary of the river Raŋha at which he in his turn sacrificed (*Yt.*15.27), should be identified as a tributary of the Jaxartes (the *Sīr-darya*).[98] (Earlier the name Raŋha had presumably been used by the nomad Iranians for some other river; and Markwart suggested[99] that the Raŋha at which the older Pāurva made his thank-offerings to Arədvī may have been the Volga.) Kərəsāspa offered sacrifice also by Lake Pišinah (*Yt.*5.37), which tradition identifies with a lake near Kabul;[100] and the *pairikā* who followed him is said to have been associated with Vaēkərəta, which is thought to be an ancient name for Gandhāra.[101] From the Jaxartes to Gandhāra (around modern Peshawar and Jalalabad) is a very considerable distance; but Kərəsāspa's legend seems to have wandered among the Iranians of the north-east (as did, for instance, tales of Gothic Eormenric and Ostrogothic Theodoric among the peoples of northern Europe[102]), and to have acquired various local associations there. It is noteworthy that according to the *Vendidād* (I.17) the ancient Thraētaona (whose actual home was presumably on the Inner Asian steppes) was born in Varəna, which has been identified with Skt. Varṇu, modern Buner;[103] and later Rustam, a Saka hero,[104] became associated with places all over Iran. Such local connections must necessarily be regarded as historically valueless. Kərəsāspa's own standing epithet in the Avesta is *naire.manah* "of manly mind, valiant"; and in later tradition this partly replaced his proper name, so that in the Persian epic he appears both in a minor role as Karšāsp or Garšāsp,[105] and more prominently as Narīmān son of Sām, who is represented (with the interweaving of diverse traditions found in the *Book of Kings*) as father of Zāl and grandfather of Rustam.[106] Naturally neither of these two Saka heroes appears in the Avesta, and it was

Persian texts, see Darmesteter, *ZA* II, 626 n. 58; Christensen, *Les Kayanides*, 99-104, 129-32, and *Le premier chapitre du Vendidad*, 31-2. The Pahlavi text from *Dinkard* IX, together with that from the Persian *Rivāyats*, has been edited and translated by Nyberg, *Oriental Studies in honour of C. E. Pavry*, London 1933, 336-52.

[98] This localisation is the corner-stone for Nyberg's elaborate speculations on the hero, see his *Religion*, index, s.v. Kərəsāspa.

[99] *Wehrot und Arang*, 136-7.

[100] See Darmesteter, *ZA* II, 376 n. 49.

[101] *Vd.* 1.9; S. Lévi, *JA*, 1925, 65-9 (endorsed by Bailey, *BSOAS* X, 1942, 917 n. 1), proposed a connection between this place-name and that of the *yakṣa* of Gandhāra, Vaikṛtika. (Nyberg, in accordance with his theory that Vayu was once a supreme god, interpreted Vaēkərəta, improbably, as deriving from *Vayu.kərəta "Made by Vayu", see his *Religion*, 317.)

[102] See H. M. Chadwick, *The Heroic Age*, Cambridge 1912, Ch. III.

[103] See Henning, *BSOAS* XII, 1947, 52-3.

[104] See Th. Nöldeke, *Das iranische Nationalepos*, 10-11; Christensen, *Les Kayanides*, 136-46.

[105] On the chronological place of Karšāsp in the later tradition (which varies with different texts) see Christensen, op. cit., 104.

[106] See Nöldeke, loc. cit., Christensen, *Les Kayanides*, 129 ff.

evidently the artificial link with them which led to associations in later times of Karšāsp Narīmān with Seistan (Sakastan) in south-eastern Iran.[107] This same link is found in the independent (but largely derivative) epic poem, the *Garšāsp Nāma*.[108]

According to legend, preserved in allusions in various passages of the Avesta,[109] the curly-haired Kərəsāspa, mighty in strength and armed with a great club or mace, succeeded in laying hold of the Khvarənah or Fortune as it left Yima of old. Like Thraētaona, he was helped in various exploits by the goddess Arədvī Sūrā and by Vayu.[110] Some of these exploits appear to be the feats of a great warrior achieved against his peers. Thus he slew the nine sons of Pathanya, the sons of Nivika and Dāštayāni, and Varəšava Dānayana and Pitaona, who was befriended by *pairikās*,[111] and the valiant Arəzō.šamana, strong and wise;[112] and he avenged the death of his brother Urvākhšaya upon his slayer, Hitāspa of the golden crown, whom he dragged behind his chariot.[113] Other of his chronicled exploits were against fabulous creatures. Several of the monsters already mentioned—Gandarəwa, the horny-handed Snāvidhka, the bird Kamak—met their deaths at Kərəsāspa's hand. His most famous encounters, however, were with the horned dragon, Sruvara, whom eventually he slew. Once he came upon this monster as it slept; and taking its vast green flank for the earth itself, overgrown with plants, he lit a fire upon it and began

[107] For the Pahlavi and later references see E. Herzfeld, *AMI*, IV, 1931/2, 115 n. 1. Nyberg, followed by Wikander and Widengren, sought to establish an ancient connection between Kərəsāspa and Seistan, while localising his legend nevertheless on the Jaxartes and in Gandhāra. See also G. Gnoli, *Ricerche storiche sul Sīstān antico*, Rome 1967.

[108] Ed. Habib Yaghmai, *Garšāspnāma*, Tehran 1317/1939; transl. H. Massé, *Le livre de Gerchāsp*, Paris 1951. In this poem Sām and Narīmān appear as the kinsmen of Garšāsp.

[109] *Y.* 9.10-11; *Yt.* 5.37-9; 13.136; 15.27-8; 19.38-44.

[110] Much has been made by Nyberg and his pupils of this connection between Vayu and Kərəsāspa, although such a link is by no means particular to Kərəsāspa, who moreover himself seeks boons also of Arədvī (as was long ago pointed out, in a reasoned criticism of Nyberg's theory, by Christensen, *Le premier chapitre du Vd.*, 30-1). Wikander developed further a theory (see his *Der arische Männerbund*, Lund 1938) that Kərəsāspa was the hero of wild bands of youths, and characterised him as fierce and brutal, given to orgies and "banner-bearing", against the gentler Thraētaona. There is nothing in the texts to support such a differentiation. Wikander postulated moreover a "Vayu-Kərəsāspa circle" and a "Mithra-Thraētaona circle" (see his *Vayu*, 177). This appears pure fiction, as does the attempt by Dumézil (*Le problème des Centaures*, 74 ff., cited by Wikander, *Vayu*, 164-5) to see in Thraētaona and Kərəsāspa two "New Year" heroes who each killed a "New Year" dragon. There is no connection between dragon-killing and the New Year in Iranian tradition. See further in Vol. II, and the appendix to Vol. IV.

[111] *Yt.* 19.41.

[112] *Yt.* 19.42. The epithets applied to Arəzō.šamana appear wholly complimentary, in keeping with the conventions often observed by heroic minstrels (see above, p. 100 n. 96); although other interpretations have been suggested for two of them by Gershevitch, *AHM*, 219 fn.

[113] *Yt.* 15.28; 19.41. See Darmesteter, *ZA* II, 586 n. 19; Bartholomae, *Air. Wb.* 1389, s.v. *vazaiδyāi*.

cooking his midday meal.[114] The heat awoke the dragon, which rushed away, overturning the pot into the fire. Kərəsāspa, affrighted, leapt clear; but he incurred thereby a sin, for the fire which he had kindled had been polluted,[115] and according to tradition the god Ātar remained implacable towards him, until at long last Zoroaster himself, with Gəuš Urvan, pleaded on his behalf and he was allowed to enter Paradise.[116] (Gəuš Urvan was concerned because the warrior-huntsman would have dedicated to him the animal whose flesh was in the pot.[117]) Other wrongful acts seem to have been attributed to Kərəsāspa, such as association with the *pairikā* Khnąthaitī,[118] and (anachronistically) hostility to the Zoroastrian religion.[119] Nevertheless this old warrior of pagan times remained one of the great heroes of Zoroastrianism. According to one legend, he is among those who never died, but is sleeping still; and at the end of the world he will awake to slay Aži Dahāka as the monster breaks loose from the fetters with which Thraētaona bound it. Yet according to the story concerning his sin against fire, Kərəsāspa died and his spirit passed a long age in the Zoroastrian limbo, exiled from Paradise. These two Zoroastrian developments of his legend perhaps belonged to different localities, and survive without being reconciled.

The legend of Kərəsāspa thus shows a mixture, found generally in heroic story the world over, of historical fact (suitably enlarged and ennobled by poetic handling) with elements from folklore and popular superstition.[120] In every country the tales of heroes tend to have certain common characteristics through being shaped within the one culture; and it is Iranian tradition, presumably, which brings about certain similarities in the legends of Thraētaona and Kərəsāspa.[121] Fighting dragons appears to have been among the feats which an Iranian hero was expected to

[114] See *Y.* 9.11; *Yt.* 19.40. For the parallel with sailors' tales of the sleeping leviathan see Darmesteter, *ZA* I, 88 n. 38.

[115] European scholars have not in general associated Kərəsāspa's sin against Ātar (which is a prominent feature of his legend) with this particular story, although this is the only recorded incident in which he wrongs fire in any way; and they tend rather to postulate some unknown event in which he sinned voluntarily, perhaps by laying still moist wood upon the fire (see Benveniste, *MO* 1932, 201). But, as we have seen, the pagan Iranians, like the Vedic Indians, did not distinguish between voluntary and involuntary sin (above, p. 88); and in fact still today among strictly orthodox Zoroastrians involuntary pollution of fire would be regarded as an act needing expiation.

[116] For references see Darmesteter, *ZA* II, 626 n. 58.

[117] See Ch. 6, below.

[118] *Vd.* 1.9.

[119] See Darmesteter, *ZA* II, 10 n. 23.

[120] See Chadwick, *The Heroic Age*, generally, but especially Ch. VI, and XII; *Growth of Literature* III, 754 ff.

[121] On these similarities see Christensen, *Les Kayanides*, 103-4; Wikander, *Vayu*, 163-78.

perform,[122] and a dragon has its part even in the legend of Haošyaŋha, Hōšang of the Persian epic, who seems essentially a "culture hero" rather than a warrior, one celebrated for discovering the arts and crafts needed by civilised man. Haošyaŋha has the epithet of *Paradhāta*, thought to mean the "first appointed", appointed, that is, to rule over the world. In the *yašts*[123] he is represented as praying to be allowed to rule all lands and all beings in them, and to destroy certain demons, "for the protection and governance of creation."[124] In the version of his story which appears in the *Book of Kings* he civilised the world, teaching men how to mine and work minerals, to irrigate and sow and reap; and one day he encountered a fire-breathing dragon with eyes like pools of blood, and boldly hurled a stone at it, driving it off. The stone struck a rock and produced fire for the benefit of mankind.[125]

Another culture hero is Takhma Urupi (Takhmūraf, Tahmūras of later tradition), who too in the Avesta seeks power over demons and men, and specifically the boon that he may ride the arch-fiend (in Zoroastrian tradition Angra Mainyu) as his horse from end to end of the earth.[126] In the *Book of Kings* he also is represented as teaching mankind useful knowledge, such as how to tame certain of the wild birds and beasts, how to shear their newly-gathered flocks and to spin the wool for clothing.[127] In the epic he is represented as the son of Hōšang, and these two, with Gayō.marətan, Yima and Thraētaona (Gayōmard, Jamšēd and Farēdōn), Manuš.čithra (Manūčihr) and one or two lesser figures, form the legendary "dynasty" of the Paradhātas or Pīšdādians. (It is interesting to note that, in contradistinction to Vedic tradition, not one of these beings is treated as a god.) It has been suggested that similarities in the stories of Haošyaŋha and Takhma Urupi may be due to these two being originally the culture heroes of different Iranian tribes. In the *Farvardīn Yašt*, 143-4, five divisions are recognised among the Iranians, namely the Airya (a term which the Avestan people appear to use of themselves), Tūirya, Sairima, Sāinu and Dāhi.[128] The eponymous founders of the second and third groups figure with "Airya" in the Pahlavi tradition as Ērēč (older *Airyaēča), Tūč (*Tūr(a)ča) and Sarm, who are represented as the three sons of Farēdōn among whom he divided the world.[129] In the *Book of Kings* they appear as Ēraj, Tūr and Salm, of whom Ēraj received the realm of Iran itself, Tūr the lands to north and east, and Salm those to the west; and ultimately the people of Tūr, the Tūranians, were identified with the alien Turks, who came to replace the Iranians in those lands.

The other great heroes of the pagan "Avestan" tradition are the forbears of Zoroaster's patron, Kavi Vištāspa. They were Airya princes, and formed the Kavyān (Kayānian) dynasty, which came to be presented as succeeding to the Paradhāta (Pīšdādian).[130] In *Yt.*19 (v.71) seven of the *kavis* are celebrated as having been accompanied by Khvarənah, so that all were valorous, strong and wise. An eighth, the great Haosravah, is celebrated separately (vv.74-7), with certain of his exploits being named. In the *Farvardīn Yašt* (v.132) the *fravašis* of the eight are honoured. The Pahlavi tradition shows that these princes represented five generations; and in the Avesta, as well as Haosravah (Kay Khosrau of the later epic), Usan/Usadhan (Kay Kayus) is especially prominent, for these two both appear among the other heroes of old who sought boons of the gods.[131] More is told of them in the Pahlavi books and the Persian epic; and probably all this material derives ultimately from the oral traditions of Vīštāspa's own house. No distinction is made in the Avesta itself between these pagan ancestors of Vištāspa's, or other pagan heroes, and the Zoroastrian princes and warriors who followed them, and who are honoured with them in the *Farvardīn* and other *yašts*. This is a development which can be readily paralleled elsewhere in oral literature. (Thus, for example, in Anglo-Saxon and Norse poems which deal with both Christians and heathens, either all the persons speak as Christians, or none is made to do so. A uniformity prevails.[132]) One finds, moreover, the same mixture of apparently historical fact with marvellous fiction in the tales of the pagan *kavis* as in those of other ancient heroes.

The most celebrated foe of the *kavis*, however, is no fabulous monster but another warrior prince, the "very strong" Fraŋrasyan of the Tūirya people. Through the usual brief allusions in the Avesta[133] (which can be

[122] A dragon appears even in the Pahlavi romance describing largely fictitious deeds of the founder of the Sasanian dynasty, see the *Kārnāmag i Ardašir i Pāpakān*, ed. D. P. Sanjana, Ch. VI ff. On dragon-killing as a motif in Iranian legend and generally see Benveniste-Renou, *Vṛtra et Vṛθragna*, 184 ff.

[123] *Yt.* 5.21-2; 9.3-4; 15.7-8; 17.24-5.

[124] *Dinkard* VIII. 13.5 (12.5) (ed. Sanjana, Vol. XV), see Darmesteter, *ZA* II, 371 n. 26.

[125] *Shāhnāma*, Tehran ed., I 17-20; transl. Warner, I 122-4.

[126] *Yt.* 15.11-12; 19.28-9.

[127] *Shāhnāma*, Tehran ed., I 20-2; transl. Warner, I 126-8.

[128] On these peoples see, e.g., Christensen, *Études sur le zoroastrisme de la Perse antique*, 15-17; Nyberg, *Rel.*, 249 ff.; Frye, *Heritage*, 40 ff.

[129] See Christensen, op. cit., 24-5.

[130] Treated in detail by Christensen in *Les Kayanides*.

[131] *Yt.* 5.45, 49-50; 9.21; 14.39.

[132] See Chadwick, *The Heroic Age*, Ch. XVII. It is said, however, in one Pahlavi text that Kərəsāspa and Haosravah will accept the Good Religion when they come back to help mankind at the end of the world (see *Pahl. Riv. Dd.* XLVIII.48, 51, ed. Dhabhar, 148, 149).

[133] *Y.* 11.7; *Yt.* 5.41-2; 9.18, 22; 19.56-64, 77, 82, 93.

amplified from the later tradition[134]) one learns that Fraŋrasyan was the foe of Kavi Usan, the third of the line. After quarrelling with his father, Usan's son Syāvaršan took refuge with Fraŋrasyan and married one of his daughters. Subsequently Fraŋrasyan's brother Kərəsavazda accused Syāvaršan of treachery and he was put to death.[135] Fraŋrasyan also slew the "wicked Zainigu", apparently a foe of the Airyas; and for a time the royal Khvarənah dwelt with him (*Yt.*19.93), evidently because he established his power, briefly at least, over the Airyas themselves. Eventually, however, Syāvaršan's son Haosravah, having reached manhood, avenged his father by slaying both Fraŋrasyan and Kərəsavazda (*Yt.*9.21; 19.77), and he re-established the rule of the *kavis*, the Khvarənah passing now to him. This act of vengeance is only one among the feats of Haosravah which are celebrated in the Avesta and tradition; but the greatness of this particular triumph is suggested by the fact that in order to achieve it he is said to have received physical help from Haoma (*Y.*11.7; *Yt.*9.18). This and the rescue of Pāurva by Arədvī Sūrā are the only instances in the Avesta of physical intervention by divine beings, so common in Greek heroic stories. The tale of help from Haoma may originally in the pagan version have been a way of saying that Haosravah roused his fighting fury for the great combat with draughts of *haoma*, as Indian warriors did theirs with *soma*, for Fraŋrasyan was clearly the most formidable of foes. In what must be one of the oldest parts of the Avesta the Tūiryan king is celebrated as having prodigious strength.[136] He is said, moreover, to have possessed a fortress all of iron, built by him beneath the earth[137] (presumably a poetic description of some impregnable stronghold). Since it is Kavyān poets who tell of Fraŋrasyan and his deeds, he naturally appears, however, even in the oldest allusions, as less glorious than his opponents, although the Khvarənah is allowed to dwell with him; and in the developed Zoroastrian tradition, in which even the pagan *kavis* are cast as upholders of the Good Religion, he is presented as an arch-villain, with the standing epithet of *mairya* "deceitful", one who deliberately opposes, not merely the *kavis* themselves, but all good works of Ahura Mazdā.[138] He thus enters the ranks of the creatures of Angra Mainyu, like the various

[134] For the Pahlavi and later material see Darmesteter, *ZA* I, 111 n. 19; II, 636 n. 114; Christensen, *Les Kayanides*, 61-9, 109-17.

[135] These details are known only from the later tradition, but harmonise with the Avestan statements that Syāvaršan met his death through treachery by Fraŋrasyan (*Yt.* 9.18, 21; 19.77).

[136] *Yt.* 19.57, 58. Fraŋrasyan shares the epithet *aš.varəčah*, "having prodigious strength", with Kavi Usan (*Yt.* 5.45).

[137] *Y.* 11.7, et pass. in the later tradition.

[138] See especially *Yt.* 19.58.

maleficent monsters of fable, and becomes virtually timeless, fighting in remote epochs against the legendary Pīšdādians, yet seeking also to seize the Khvarənah of Zoroaster himself (*Yt.*19.82); and in the Pahlavi *Dīnkard* he is explicitly said to have become a *dēv*, for whom there is no hope of salvation.[139] What one may assume to be the oldest layer of Avestan material shows clearly, however, that in fact the mighty warrior Fraŋrasyan was a heroic figure, who flourished during the reign of Usan, the third of the *kavis*, and perished in that of their grandson Haosravah, Fraŋrasyan's daughter's child.

Hostility between Tūirya and Airya is indicated also in the *Farvardīn Yašt* (vv. 37-8), where the *fravašis* of the just are said to give aid in battle against the Dānus, who appear to be a sept or clan of the Tūra people; and in *Yt.*5 (v.73) three warriors, presumably Airyas, ask Arədvī to help them overcome certain Tūiryan Dānus. In these circumstances much has been made of the appearance of a Tūra, Fryāna by name, at the court of Kavi Vīštāspa himself. He became a follower of Zoroaster's and is mentioned with praise in the *Gāthās* (*Y.*46.12). There are, however, many instances from comparable cultures of a man of rank taking service under a foreign prince of renown, sometimes even when hostility existed between his own people and his new lord.[140] Among the ancient Iranians there is the instance of Syāvaršan himself, seeking refuge with his father's enemy Fraŋrasyan, and making his life among the Tūiryas. There is no need therefore to refine upon the appearance of a solitary Tūra noble at Vīštāspa's court.[141] Two descendants of Fryāna are mentioned in the Younger Avesta. One, Yōišta, was celebrated for a famous feat, not, in this instance, victory in physical combat but in a contest of wits, in which he solved all the riddling questions put to him by the wicked Akhtya, a sorcerer seeking to gain power through his defeat. Yōišta is represented as achieving this victory by favour of Arədvī (*Yt.*5.82), who, as we have seen, was able as a divinity of water to bestow wisdom; and a Pahlavi text sets out the

[139] Dk. III.110.13 (cited by Casartelli, *Philosophy*, 135 n. 6).

[140] See, e.g., Chadwick, *The Heroic Age*, 330, 350-1.

[141] On this slight basis a remarkable edifice of theory was erected by Nyberg and added to by Wikander. This Fryāna of the *Gāthās* and Yōišta Fryāna (see below) are the only two men of this line identified in the Avesta (the Pahlavi tradition adds a third, see also below), and very little is known of either of them. But Nyberg arbitrarily assigned to their family or sept various other persons named by Zoroaster (*Rel.*, 248 ff.), seeing the Fryānas as the community among whom the prophet practised his "Religionspolitik" (ibid., p. 263). He located them upon the Jaxartes (p. 252), and named Arədvī as their especial goddess (p. 261), with Kərəsāspa as their great hero (pp. 300, 307). They are held early to have adopted Vayu as their supreme god (p. 300); and according to Wikander (*Vayu*, passim) there can be found in *Yt.* 15 traces of a "Fryāna" dialect as well as a "Fryāna" religion. All this belongs to the realm of fantasy.

details of the encounter.[142] His *fravaši* is honoured in the *Farvardīn Yašt* v.120; and in the same verse Ašəm.yahmāi.ušta is reverenced, who according to Pahlavi tradition was also a Fryāna.[143] His name, meaning "To whom righteousness according to desire", stems from Zoroaster's own words (*Y*.43.1).

The heroic material in the Avestan *yašts* appears to derive from the traditions of different Iranian peoples over many generations; and it is only possible tentatively to distinguish historical fact and accurate genealogies from poetic fiction and fable. Personal names are probably reliable, but place names appear of doubtful value, since they often seem to have wandered with the wandering peoples or to have been newly associated with ancient stories. In the mass of material which has descended from pagan times there are seemingly preserved both secular and priestly traditions, transmitted by minstrel poets as well as by religious schools; and there are elements also of popular superstition and dread, in the tales of demons and witches and fearsome beasts. These intermingle with the stories of valour, which show also the power of the gods to grant men's prayers and succour them in distress. All this provided a rich inheritance for the Zoroastrian priests of later times, when they came to develop a history of the world in accordance with the prophet's great vision of it as a place continually divided between the warring forces of good and evil; and hence something of the content of pagan Iranian literature and tradition came to be preserved in the Zoroastrian holy books.

[142] Published by M. Haug and E. W. West as Appendix I to *The Book of Arda Viraf*, Bombay and London, 1872, 205-66. On riddle literature in general, as a widespread oral genre, see Chadwick, *Growth of Literature* III, 834 ff.

[143] *Dādestān ī dīnīg*, *Purs.* 89.3, see West, *SBE* XVIII, 256 n. 3.

CHAPTER FOUR

DEATH, THE HEREAFTER AND FUNERAL RITES

Evidently no single exclusive belief was held by the Indo-Iranians about death and the hereafter. For them as for other peoples different concepts co-existed. It is clear, however, from the evidence of both the Vedas and the most archaic Avestan texts that the continuance of life after death was something taken for granted, as self-evident and not open to question. It was only about its nature and place that there was a divergence of beliefs and hopes and fears.[1]

It is now generally accepted that the old funeral practice of the Indo-Iranians was burial. This lies remotely behind a number of Indian rituals and texts, and is the general practice attested for the pagan Iranians.[2] Even the Zoroastrian word *dakhma*, used later for the place where corpses were exposed, comes, it seems, not (as used to be thought) from the base *dag* "burn", but through **dafma* from the IE base **dhm̥bh* "bury".[3] This ancient rite of burial appears to have been associated with an equally ancient concept of a home of the spirits of the dead beneath the earth; and a passage in Herodotus (VII.114) shows that belief in the god of this subterranean kingdom of the dead survived among the Iranians into Achaemenian times: "I learn that Amestris, the wife of Xerxes, when she grew old, buried alive fourteen children of distinguished Persians, endeavour-

[1] The conclusions reached by Oldenberg in this section of his study of Vedic religion were to a large extent adopted and developed, with valuable additional data, by E. Arbman, "Tod und Unsterblichkeit im vedischen Glauben", I, *ARW* XXV, 1927, 339-87, II, XXVI, 1928, 187-240, q.v. for further bibliography.

[2] See, e.g., Herodotus I.140; III.62; IV.71; VII.117; Arrian, *Anabasis* VI.29.5. The account in Herodotus VIII.24 of how after Thermopylae Xerxes had all but a thousand of the slain from his army buried in trenches, in order to conceal the true numbers of his dead, has of course no general significance. After the slaughter of the citizens of Kerman by Afghan invaders in the 18th century the Zoroastrians there were obliged by the sheer number of corpses to bury their dead, and this "*dakhma*", an enclosed mound of earth, can still be seen. Doubt is fairly generally felt about the words attributed by Xenophon (*Cyropaedia* VIII. 7.25) to Cyrus the Younger, whom he represents as agnostic about the future existence of the soul, asking that his body should be restored to the earth so that he might become part of her, she being "the benefactor of mankind". With regard to the canard by Onesicritus (recorded by Strabo, XI.11.3) that down to the time of Alexander the inhabitants of Bactria disposed of their dying simply by flinging them to dogs in the streets see Henning, *Zoroaster*, 20-2; W. W. Tarn, *The Greeks in Bactria and India*, Cambridge 1938, 115-6. In general on what is known of ancient Persian funeral customs see A. Rapp, *ZDMG* XIX, 1865, 13; XX, 53-6; K. A. Inostrantzev, "On the Ancient Iranian burial customs...", transl. by L. Bogdanov, *JCOI* 3, 1923, 1-28; L. H. Gray, *ERE* IV, 505.

[3] See K. Hoffmann, *KZ* LXXIX, 1965, 238.

ing to propitiate on her own account the god who is said to dwell beneath the earth".[4] As for ancient India, in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (XIII.8.1. 20) it is said: "The (world of) the Fathers [i.e. the departed ancestors] is truly the world of the plants. To the roots of the plants they (the Fathers) go".[5] In the Indian texts the paths that the gods traverse, the *devayāna*, which unite earth with heaven, are often distinguished from the "deep paths" which the Fathers take, the *pitṛyāna*.[6] The latter are said in a number of passages to be "downward" ways, leading to a world below.

Yet in the Vedas the place of the dead which is chiefly spoken of is on high, in the sky; and it is widely held that the Indian funeral rite of burning the body developed in harmony with this later doctrine, the spirit (it was thought) being released to fly upward with the flames.[7] It ascended to the third heaven, there to dwell with Varuṇa and Yama in a state of bliss, enjoying sun and light, *soma*, milk and honey, songs and melody and the joys of love.[8] That such happiness could be experienced by a disembodied spirit was plainly inconceivable; and the Vedic Indians held that the physical body, its flesh destroyed by fire, was recreated and raised up, to be united again with the soul in Paradise.[9] For this reason the bones were carefully collected from the funeral pyre, and any that were missing were symbolically replaced so that nothing should be lacking for this resurrection, which (it seems) was thought of as taking place soon after the soul's ascent. The characteristic funerary practice of North India in the Iron Age has been shown to be post-cremation burial in urns or pits.[10]

The rite of cremation is barely attested among the Iranians (and in one of the two instances recorded it is represented as an act of deliberate desecration[11]); but as far as beliefs are concerned, traces in the Avesta suggest

[4] On this passage see Moulton, *EZ*, 57. Sacrifices to a god of the dead to prolong the sacrificer's own life are well known from other lands. Cf., e.g., the story in the *Ynglinga Saga*, 29, that Aun, king of Sweden, sacrificed to Othin one of his own sons every tenth year, thus obtaining ninety additional years of life (see Chadwick, *Cult of Othin*, 4).

[5] See Thieme, *Studien zur idg. Wortkunde*, 57; Keith, *Rel. and phil.* II, 421-2. For various other traces in the Vedas of the idea of the dead dwelling in the earth, either actually at the place of burial or in an underworld, see Keith, ibid., 410-15.

[6] See Oldenberg, *Rel.*, 546-7; Arbman, art. cit. I, 359-73; II, 187-94; Keith, op. cit., 411.

[7] See Oldenberg, *Rel.*, 549: Arbman, art. cit. I, 339, 349. A similar development appears to have taken place, e.g., in Scandinavia in antiquity, for when the conception of an afterlife in Valhǫll replaced that of one spent by the spirit in its grave-mound, then cremation replaced the old practice of howe-burial. See Chadwick, *Cult of Othin*, 57-61.

[8] See Oldenberg, *Rel.*, 535-36; Keith, *Rel. and phil.* II, 407; Arbman, art. cit. I, 339-40.

[9] See Oldenberg, *Rel.*, 529-30; Keith, *Rel. and phil.* II, 405-6; Arbman, art. cit. I, 339-40; Gonda, *Rel. Indiens* I, 138.

[10] See P. Singh, *Burial Practices in Ancient India, Indian Civilisation Series*, XVII, Varanasi 1970, 131 ff.

[11] Herodotus III.16, where Cambyses is said to have dishonoured the embalmed body

that the pagan Iranians shared the Vedic hope of a future life in Paradise, full of light and happiness and physical delights.[12] In a fragment of the *Hādhokht Nask* which describes the arrival of the soul in Paradise it is stated that it is there offered spring butter to eat—the most delicious, evidently, of pastoral foods;[13] and in *Yasna* 16.7 it is said: "We worship the sun-possessing abodes of *aša*, in which dwell the souls of the dead . . . the Best Existence (i.e. Paradise) of the followers of *aša* . . . (which is) light and affording all comforts". In the Vedas the sacrificers of horses, that is, the highly meritorious, are said to dwell near the sun, whose brightness makes this a place of the highest reward;[14] and in both literatures there is emphasis on the light and radiance of Paradise, in contrast (presumably) to the "blind darkness" of the subterranean kingdom of the dead.

These similarities between Indian and Iranian belief make it appear that hope of such salvation on high was conceived already in the Indo-Iranian period, when presumably priestly ponderings on the immortality and blessedness of the heavenly gods prompted longings for a better lot in the hereafter for men also.[15] It is possible therefore that an aristocratic funeral custom attested among the Iranians in antiquity was also connected with this belief. This is the costly rite whereby the body was embalmed and laid in a tomb-chamber[16], either free-standing on a stone plinth, like Cyrus' tomb at Pasargadae, or cut in living rock, like those of the succeeding Achaemenians, or resting on the ground and covered with a great

of the Egyptian king Amasis by having it burnt. "This was truly an impious command to give" (he comments) "for the Persians hold fire to be a god, ... and say it is wrong to defile a god with a human corpse." The only other recorded instance of cremation among Iranians in historic times within Iran itself is that of a young Chionite prince in the fourth century A.C.; his body was burnt and the bones were collected and carried back to his homeland to be buried (Ammianus Marcellinus, XIX.2.1). The Soviet scholar A. M. Mandelshtam has excavated at Tulkhar and other sites in Tajikestan the remains of cremated bodies which he is inclined to associate with inroads by a new nomadic people, possibly the Chionites, at that time; see Frumkin, *Soviet Archaeology in Central Asia*, 70.

[12] Widengren, *Rel. Irans*, 134, argued that the early Achaemenians did not believe in a resurrection of the body, basing this opinion on the words attributed to Prexaspes (Herodotus, III.62) when he avowed to Cambyses that he had slain his brother Smerdis: "With my own hands I buried him. If of truth the dead can leave their graves, expect Astyages the Mede to rise and fight against you; but if the course of nature be the same as formerly, then be sure no ill will ever come upon you from this quarter". But this need be no more than a strong asseveration of the fact of death. Corpses do not rise up again in *this* world, which was all that immediately concerned Prexaspes and his questioner.

[13] *Hādhokht Nask* II.38; see Haug and West, *The Book of Arda Viraf*, appendix II, 292/314.

[14] See Oldenberg, *Rel.*, 534. On the monthly horse-sacrifice at the tomb of Cyrus see below.

[15] See Arbman, art. cit. II, 231-32.

[16] Probably Herodotus' statement (I. 140) that the Persians interred the body after coating it with wax refers to this practice, for it is not likely that this elaborate procedure was common throughout the community, or connected with the ordinary rite of inhumation.

mound of stones and earth, like those of the Saka princes.[17] Even in the last instance the earth did not press upon the body, but space was left around and above it in the chamber; and possibly the custom of preserving the body and entombing it like this was linked with the hope that both spirit and flesh would in due course ascend to immortality above. Yet as late as the fifth century B.C. Herodotus records Persian practices which show that belief in an underworld kingdom of the dead persisted. We have already met Amestris' sacrifice through burial alive of chosen victims; and with it Herodotus records another such sacrifice of youths and maidens, observing "Burying alive is a Persian custom".[18] From these instances it would appear that priests and nobles, while hoping for heaven for themselves, still believed in a general after-life beneath the earth, and were prepared on occasion to propitiate the ancient lord of darkness by sending him other humans to people his realm, whose bodies were laid in earth as the nearest gateway to his abode. This evidence of dual beliefs accords with the deduction made by Vedic scholars that originally, and for countless generations, the Indians restricted hope of Paradise to the leading members of their community, to princes and warriors and priests—to those, that is, who had the means or knowledge necessary to win the favour of the gods.[19] Presumably therefore, when Amestris sacrificed the "children of distinguished Persians" rather than foreign captives or commoners, she was making a choice offering to the god of the underworld, the more surely to buy her own salvation. In the case of natural death a distinction appears between the funeral rites of noble and commoner, which was perhaps not solely dictated by a difference in means. Thus the impressive funerary chambers of Saka princes are associated with many humbler burials set directly within the earth.[20]

Archaeologists have found that the rite of cremation was practised in the late Bronze Age by bearers of the Andronovo culture in Central Asia, who may possibly have been Indian peoples on their slow way south.[21]

[17] For the literary references see above, p. 109 n. 2. On the Scythian tombs see E. H. Minns, *Scythians and Greeks*, Cambridge 1913, 87-8; M. Rostovtzeff, *Iranians and Greeks in South Russia*, Oxford 1922, 44 ff.; and on the burial mounds of Saka princes on the Ili between the 7th and 4th centuries B.C., with references, K. Jettmar, *East and West*, n.s. XVII, 1967, 64-5 (who gives a detailed account of the elaborate structure of the tombs).

[18] VII. 114.

[19] One may compare the distinction apparently recognised of old by the Scandinavians: "Othin possesses the nobles who fall in battle, but Thor has the race of serfs". See Chadwick, *Cult of Othin*, 27.

[20] See Jettmar, loc. cit.

[21] See, e.g., Frumkin, *Archaeology in Soviet Central Asia*, 68-9, with references to the work of Mandelshtam at Tulkhar (14th-13th centuries B.C.).

Immense burial grounds have, however, been discovered there from the same time and in association with the same culture, which perhaps belonged to Iranian peoples;[22] and on the Iranian plateau a "vast cemetery" is known associated with the presumed Iranian occupation of Tepe Sialk.[23] It seems, therefore, that burial was still the ordinary funerary practice of the Iranians when they invaded their new home; and that whereas among the Indians this rite yielded to cremation followed by interment of the bones, in Iran it was replaced more gradually by exposure, similarly followed by interment of the skeletal remains. There appears to be no evidence for this latter practice before the first millennium B.C.; and it is earliest attested in Central Asia itself, and in Eastern Iran.[24] It has been suggested that it may indeed have evolved in Central Asia, which was a region particularly favourable to it, with its dry air and stretches of desert between oasis settlements;[25] and it is possible that it developed, like the Indian rite of cremation, in connection with belief in an after-life in heaven, an ascent to Paradise above. For different though the two observances are, both seem linked with a common desire to release the soul swiftly and allow it to mount upwards, free from the body, instead of being shut down with the corpse beneath the earth. Still today those Zoroastrians who maintain the rite of exposure think of it in terms of the body lying in sunlight instead of being thrust into darkness under the soil. Especial stress is laid on the need for the "life-giving" sun to shine upon it;[26] and the

[22] See B. A. Litvinskij, *East and West* XVIII, 1968, 131-2.

[23] See Ghirshman, *Fouilles de Sialkh près de Kashan*, Paris 1938-9; and briefly in his *Iran*, London 1954, 77-83.

[24] From Achaemenian times (e.g. at Kalaly-Gyr) and onwards the rite is well attested in Central Asia, see, with references, Frumkin, *Archaeology in Soviet Central Asia*, 22, 92 (Kalaly-Gyr), 96, 99-103, 113, 125, 151. "Post-excarnation" burials in cairns and stone enclosures from an early date were found by Aurel Stein in Baluchistan, see his account in *Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India* 43, Calcutta 1931, 77-82. Down to the present century the Iranian Kafirs of Afghanistan disposed of their dead by exposing them in wooden coffins on mountain tops (see Chr. Lassen, *Indische Alterthumskunde* I, 2nd ed., Leipzig 1867, 520; cited by Söderblom, *ERE* IV, 504); but it seems likely that this is a local derivative of Zoroastrian observance. It has been suggested that exposure should be regarded as a characteristic nomad rite, and parallels of a sort have been adduced from among the Turks of Central and N.E. Asia, as well as from Mongolia and Tibet (see, with references, Inostrantzev, *JCOI* 3, 1923, 9-11); but none of these parallels is pre-Zoroastrian, and the nomadic Scythians do not appear to have practised any such observance. (On Greek reports of Bactrian customs see above, p. 109 n. 2. Those attributed to the Massagetae are also post-Zoroastrian, as well as being particular in character.)

[25] See K. Jettmar, following Y. A. Rapoport, *East and West* XVII, 1967, 62.

[26] See *Vd.* 5.13, 7.45, and the Pahlavi gloss on *Vd.* 3.9 (Darmesteter, *ZA* II, 36 n. 15) where it is lamented that men should be buried "beneath the ground, not being beheld by the sun .. for this (spirit?) which has been in the sun's beholding has greater hope (of Paradise)" *(azēr zamīn, nē khwarkhšēd nigirišn ... čē in i ḍad khwarkhšēd nigirišn be būd, ēmēdwartar)*. In the *Pahl. Riv. of Ādurfarnbag*, CXVIII (BTA, Bombay 1969, text, I 65/137, transl., II 107) it is assumed that the purpose of digging up a dead body would be to expose it to the sun. For a purely practical explanation of the need for this exposure see

fundamental pagan concept was probably that the sun drew the released soul upward into the sky—the Iranians' veneration of fire being too great, evidently, to allow them to make a fire-path for the ascending spirit, as their Indian cousins did. Hence comes, presumably, the Zoroastrian usage whereby no corpse is ever carried to the place of exposure between sunset and sunrise—although formerly, when beasts of prey helped to devour the dead, the hours of darkness might otherwise have seemed as practical as those of day. Both peoples had, however, to reconcile this hope of an immediate ascent of the spirit with the evidently older doctrine that it lingered on the earth for three days after death, before departing downward to the underground kingdom of the dead. There seems little chance that a sufficiently firm chronology will ever be established for it to be known whether exposure was practised in Central Asia before Zoroaster's day; but the likelihood appears to be that the prophet, with the courage to innovate given him by his revelation, either evolved this rite or fostered it in connection with his own doctrines, because of the eschatalogical hope which it represented. Funerary customs are notoriously hard to change, however, even with a change of beliefs; and even in the aristocratic Rigveda there are still references to the rite of inhumation. One funeral hymn survives, for instance, in which a warrior is said to be laid in the ground, which is besought to cover him "as a mother wraps her skirt around her child" (*RV* 10.18.11).[27] In pagan Iran too some nobles may have preferred simple interment to embalming or exposure, as being the custom of their forefathers, or because they preferred their spirits to remain close to their descendants on this familiar earth, rather than being released to ascend to an unknown heaven.[28]

As for entry into heaven, it is said in the Rigveda that Paradise is a place "where they sit who have done good" (*RV* 10.17.4),[29] but it seems likely that by this was meant those who had been punctilious in religious observance, the generous sacrificers, the open-handed givers of largesse,

Dādestān i dinig, Purs. XVI.11 (ed. Dhabhar, 37, transl. West, *SBE* XVIII, 40). In general on the references to burial in the *Vendidād* see Humbach, "Bestattungsformen im Vidēvdāt" *KZ* LXXII, 1958, 99-105; A. Kammenhuber, "Totenvorschriften ... im Vidēvdāt", *ZDMG* CVIII, 1958, 304-7; and further below, Ch. 12, Appendix.

[27] On this hymn see W. Caland, *Die altindischen Todten- und Bestattungsgebräuche*, Amsterdam 1896, 164; Geldner, *Der Rigveda übersetzt*, II, 152. On the very slight archaeological evidence (more deductive than circumstantial) for inhumation in Rigvedic times see S. Piggott, *Prehistoric India*, 286-7.

[28] Among the pagan Scandinavians the rite of cremation, once introduced, was not universally adopted or maintained, certain Danish kings, for example, reverting to howe-burial, apparently in order to remain in death among their people, see Chadwick, *Cult of Othin*, 57-61.

[29] See Oldenberg, *Rel.*, 536.

rather than those distinguished by ethical attainment. Nevertheless, the doctrine that a place in Paradise had to be earned must have carried the corollary that any other destination was for the less deserving; and scholars have accordingly been exercised as to whether a belief in Hell can be found already in the Rigveda.[30] Oldenberg was inclined to interpret the few problematic passages which exist as justifying such an interpretation;[31] and Konow, agreeing, linked the supposed doctrine with the evolution of the ethical Asuric religion of the Indo-Iranians.[32] The place of retribution was, he suggested, thought of as one into which the Lords of heaven cast sinners, as earthly kings cast malefactors into jail. Jails hardly form part of a nomad tradition, however; and although such a doctrine can be clearly established for later times, no certain evidence for it can be found in the Rigveda. For the earliest period in India there seem to have been only the two beliefs, one in a joyful existence in Paradise above, the other in a shadowy, joyless one beneath the earth. It is the latter, Arbman suggests,[33] which was called "death" by the Vedic Indian, who wished it, along with all other evils, in maledictions upon his foe; and it was from this "death" that he himself sought to escape, by due observances, sacrifices and prayers. Indeed it is thought that many of the Vedic rituals (like a number of Zoroastrian ones still today[34]) were performed with the hope of thereby obtaining "immortality", that is, a happy hereafter in the kingdom of heaven, instead of death or mere grey continuance, which was the evil thing, the *pāpman*, that was dreaded by the bravest of men.[35] Similarly in the ancient Iranian *Yasna Haptaŋhāiti* the worshippers seek ardently for "life *(gaya-)* and corporality *(astəntāt-)* in both worlds" (*Y*.41.3), longing by implication to escape the underworld kingdom of insubstantial "death".[36] Yet plainly "the more people accustomed themselves to making entry into heaven dependant on certain . . . qualifications and to seeing in it a reward for the good behaviour of men upon earth, the

[30] For a bibliography of the discussion see Arbman, art. cit., I, 342-5.

[31] See his *Rel.*, 537-40 and cf. Keith, *Rel. and phil.* II, 409-10.

[32] *Die Inder*, 541.

[33] Art. cit. I, 377-9.

[34] Notably the ceremony of *gēti-kharīd*, the "world purchased", by which a man or woman can hope to "purchase" salvation in the world to come. See *GBd.* XXXIV.26 (transl. *BTA*, 291); *Saddar Bd.* XLII.4, 10-11 (ed. Dhabhar, 112, 113, transl. Dhabhar, *Rivāyats*, 534); Modi, *CC*, 406-7. On Vedic ideas of securing salvation from death see Rodhe, *Deliver us from evil*, 85 ff.

[35] See Arbman, art. cit., I, 378, 384. The question of "immortality" is however complicated, since *amŋtatva*, though often thus rendered, is literally "not dying", and can also be used for long life on earth, or continuance through descendants here. See Rodhe, op. cit., 81 ff.

[36] Cf. *Y*. 35.3; 40.2; 41.2, 6 (all passages concerned with the two worlds—this one and Paradise on high).

more they also became inclined to see in the descent into the kingdom of the dead a consequence of past sins. This by no means signifies that the concept of the kingdom of the dead was simply replaced by that of Hell. Rather the two ideas lived on side by side and independently. Thus the later Vedic literature . . . knows well both a general kingdom of the dead and also a hell"[37]—a hell which was often conceived as an especial part of the underworld.[38] A parallel development, on a strictly ethical pattern, can be seen in Zoroaster's own teachings concerning the hereafter, according to which there were three abodes, Heaven, Hell and a shadowy between-place for the morally indifferent, whose inhabitants knew neither joy nor pain, but merely existence.

Once hope had developed of a happy life in sunlit heaven, the negative kingdom of the dead must have come to seem more dreadful in itself, even without the presence of torments. It is probable, moreover, that ancient imaginings early created a number of ghostly terrors that made the way there the more fearsome. There seems to have been a common old belief in some dangerous crossing-place, possibly of an underground lake or river;[39] and associated with this there was apparently a myth of a pair of "four-eyed" dogs by whom the spirit must pass to reach even the drear haven of the kingdom of the dead. In India these hounds were associated with Yama,[40] who, as we have seen, was regarded there as lord of the underworld, and indeed as Death itself. This concept of him continued (and continues) in popular belief in India and among Buddhists;[41] but in the literary and aristocratic Rigveda Yama appears more often as a mild king of the blessed, dwelling with Varuṇa in the third heaven, playing upon a flute beneath a fig-tree. Evidently the development of belief in an after-life in Paradise had led to his translation from his ancient subterranean kingdom to heaven above. "Too closely linked with the 'Fathers' to be excluded from their company, he was elevated to be the king of Paradise".[42] The "four-eyed" dogs, Yama's messengers, which had lurked, Cerberus-like, on the dark ways of death now became guardians of the Vedic Paradise of Light. In Iran too Yima is sometimes found in

[37] Arbman, art. cit. II, 233.
[38] Cf. the later Greek concept of places of punishment within Hades.
[39] See Arbman, II, 235; Thieme, *Studien zur idg. Wortkunde*, 53.
[40] On the hounds of Yama see Oldenberg, *Rel.*, 538; Keith, *Rel. and Phil.* II, 406-7; Arbman, art. cit. II, 217-9. They are known only from the Rigveda. More generally on dogs of death see B. Schlerath, "Der Hund bei den Indogermanen", *Paideuma* VI, 1954, 25-40.
[41] See Arbman, art. cit. II, 224 n. 1.
[42] Ibid., II, 223.

Paradise on high;[43] and there the place of the dogs is at the Činvatō Pərətu.[44] This name means (it seems) "The crossing of the Separator". *Pərətu* can denote crossings of various kinds,[45] and it is possible that in the remote past this term was used of a ford or ferry-place over underground waters, and that it was with the development of belief in Paradise on high that it became a bridge over an abyss, of which one end rested on the highest peak of earth, the other on the road to heaven.[46] Paradise itself (to judge from the Vedas) was thought of as ruled over by the Asuras/Ahuras; and there can be no doubt that it was to their "kingdom" that those souls were held to go who were *ašavan/ṛtavan*, that is, who had acted and worshipped in accordance with *aša/ṛta* during their lives: "The man who behaves according to the law . . . established, and worships . . . in proper style in accord with *arta*, becomes happy while living, and *artāvan* when dead".[47]

What complicates matters further for the study of Iranian beliefs about the hereafter is the use of two distinct terms for the departed spirit which, although they often appear as synonyms in the later Zoroastrian scriptures, seem in origin to have been in a measure distinct. Both are of doubtful etymology. One, *urvan*, was used generally for the spirits of dead men and animals.[48] Thus in the archaic *Yasna Haptaŋhāiti* the worshippers reverence "our souls and (those) of domestic animals which nourish us" *(ahmākəng . . . urunō pasukānąmčā yōi nå jījišəntī)* (*Y*.39.1). The divinity which is the sum of the souls of sacrificed animals is called Gəuš Urvan, "The Soul of the Bull". Originally, it seems, animal souls which had been consecrated were held, like those of men, to make their way downward into the hereafter,[49] to graze the shadowy pastures of "Yima of the good herds". Presumably, therefore, *urvan* originally meant the disembodied spirit which went to dwell beneath the earth. The other term is *fravaši*, deriving from an Old Iranian **fravarti*. Both the literal meaning of this word, and the significance of the concept, have been matter for prolonged

[43] See above, p. 94.
[44] *Vd.* 13.9, 19.30.
[45] This point is made by Nyberg, *Rel.*, 185.
[46] Or possibly the *Pərətu* was originally a bridge over underground waters. Cf. the Norse myth of a bridge leading to the home of the dead, Chadwick apud Moulton, *EZ*, 165; and for further parallels Söderblom, *RHR* XXXIX, 412 n. 6; Modi, *CC*, 79, n. 2.
[47] Xerxes, "The *daiva* inscription", 50-6 (Kent, *Old Persian*, 1950, 151-2). On this passage see Bailey, *Zor. Problems*, 87 n. 4; Kuiper, *IIJ* IV, 1960, 185-6; Gershevitch, *JNES* XXIII, 1964, 19. On OP *arta* ~ Av. *aša* see above, p. 27 n. 29.
[48] Thieme has abandoned his tentative association of *urvan* with *urvarā* "plant" in the light of the remarks of M. Mayrhofer, *Studien zur indogerm. Grundsprache, Arbeiten aus dem Institut für allg. und vergl. Sprachwissenschaft*, Graz, 4, Vienna 1952, 53 (a reference which I owe to the kindness of Professor Thieme himself).
[49] See Arbman, art. cit., I, 378.

discussion.[50] Formally its obvious derivation is from *fra* and a verbal root *var*, with the abstract suffix *-ti* creating a feminine noun. Unfortunately there is a wealth of roots *var*, with a wide range of meanings. Lommel, who favoured *var* "choose", thought that the word was coined by Zoroaster himself, and that it signified that part in man which was capable of moral choice.[51] The term does not in fact occur in the *Gāthās*, but he considered it possible that it was a synonym for another problematic word, Gathic *daēnā* (variously rendered as "conscience", "soul" or "self"). Most scholars, however, stress the absence of any reference to the *fravaši* by Zoroaster, and see in it therefore a primitive amoral concept which was ignored by the prophet. Such an interpretation was developed by N. Söderblom in his admirable monograph on the subject.[52] He suggested that the original concept, dating back to a remote antiquity, had been of a terrestrial continuation of more or less the whole person surviving invisibly, a being of some menace, to be propitiated with offerings and called placatingly **fravarti* "protector" (from the base *var* "cover, enclose"), as "a euphemism to designate the dangerous and powerful dead". This interpretation was broadly endorsed by Moulton, who, however, derived the word tentatively from the base *var* "make pregnant", and connected the concept with the *fravašis*' care for birth. "Ancestor-spirits" (he observes) "in a very early stage of human society are believed to be actually responsible for the pregnancy of women . . . It seems, therefore, at least possible that their name may have been at first a special cult-title of the ancestor-spirits as the powers that continue the race".[53] By either of these interpretations the Iranian *fravaši* would be closely parallel to the Indian *pitaras*, but also (it would seem) virtually indistinguishable from the *urvan*. A more convincing interpretation therefore appears to be that proposed by H. W. Bailey, who suggested that originally the word **fravarti* might have been used for the departed spirit of a hero, a possessor of **vṛti-* "valour".[54] If this is so, then it must be supposed that among the warlike Iranians there once existed a hero-cult, in which those who had been strong and powerful in their lives were worshipped by their descendants as still being potent to help and protect them. The *fravaši* appears to have been conceived as a winged and warlike being, female,

[50] For summaries of some of the numerous interpretations, with references, see Moulton, *EZ*, 271 n. 1; Gray, *Foundations*, 77-9; G. Gropp, *Wiederholungsformen im Jung-Awesta*, Hamburg 1966, 37. For a bibliography on the *fravašis* in general see Moulton, *EZ*, 256 n. 1.

[51] See his introduction to *Yt.* 13 in *Die Yäšt's*, 164 ff. Similarly Corbin, *Eranos-Jahrbuch* XX, 1951, 169.

[52] "Les Fravashis", I, *RHR* XXXIX, 1899, 229-60: II, ibid., 373-418.

[53] *EZ*, 270.

[54] *Zor. Problems*, 109.

like the Valkyries, and an inhabitant of the air rather than one dwelling beneath the ground, who was swift to fly to the help of those of its kinsmen who had satisfied it with prayers and offerings. Probably, though, there were resemblances from the earliest times in ritual and observances between a specialised *fravaši*-cult and the general cult of the *urvan*, and these must have helped beliefs about the two to blur and mingle. The development of the concept of a Paradise in the sky was presumably another factor leading to confusion. If the *fravaši* is in fact by origin a hero-spirit, one would expect it to be the *fravašis* who would be first thought of as dwelling with the gods, but it is actually the *urvan* who is chiefly associated with Paradise.[55] Possibly an age-old belief in the *fravašis* as ever-present helpers and guardians prevented their being readily conceived as having a dwelling remoter than the surrounding air; and it may also have been difficult to reconcile the idea of these winged beings with the presumably later doctrine of a resurrection of the body. Even in the more recent texts of the Younger Avesta phrases occur which suggest that the *fravašis* were thought of as living here below, for example *Y.*23.3: "I summon to the sacrifice the *fravaši* of each just person, wherever it may be upon this earth . . .".

The oldest Avestan mention of the *fravašis* is in *Yasna Haptaŋhāiti*. Here, as we have seen, in one passage the worshippers reverence their own souls *(urunō)*, the *urvan* being, it seems, the possession of every man; but in another (*Y.*37.3) they honour Ahura Mazdā himself together with "the *fravašis* of the just" *(ašāvanąm fravašīš)*. What distinction existed at this stage between the two concepts there is no means of knowing. The long hymn to the *fravašis*, the *Farvardīn Yašt* (*Yt.*13)[56], appears to be in part very ancient, in part strongly Zoroastrian; and here the beliefs in *fravaši* and *urvan* seem both separate and yet partially fused. In the later Avesta, as in modern usage, the identification tends to be complete, and the formula occurs: "We worship the souls of the dead, which are the *fravašis* of the just" *(iristanąm urvąnō yazamaide yå ašaonąm fravašayō)*.[57] Even in the case of such an evidently ancient concept as Gəuš Urvan, there occurs very occasionally in late passages the alternative expression Gəuš Fravaši.[58] In all Zoroastrian invocations of the *fravašis* they are addressed as *ašavan*. This epithet, as we have seen, had an especial significance in

[55] See Söderblom, art. cit., 394.

[56] *Fravardīn* is the Middle Persian (Pahlavi) plural of Old Persian **fravarti* ~ Av. *fravaši*, which in later usage came to be pronounced *farvardīn*.

[57] E.g. *Y.* 26.7.

[58] *Y.* 13.7; *Yt.* 13.86; cf. *Sirōza* 2.12; and see Söderblom, art. cit., 397. In *Yt.* 13.74 the souls *(urunō)* of the five categories are worshipped and then (it seems) their *fravašis*.

pagan times as indicating the blessed dead; and it may be old custom that the *fravašis* were regularly so described, in courtesy and hope, by their descendants. It is, however, also possible that it became invariable usage after the ancient pagan cult was assimilated by Zoroaster to his own ethical teachings.

The original belief about the *urvan*, conceived as inhabiting the shadowy underworld, was plainly that it lived there hapless and deprived, dependent on its kinsmen and descendants for comfort and sustenance. Not for such ghosts the delicate foods or "wish cows" of Paradise; they must look to those living still on earth to satisfy their hunger and to clothe them. Offerings for this purpose had to be made ritually and at specified times, in order that they should reach the spirits through the barrier of matter; and so ancient and deep-engrained were the customs concerned that they survived the change of belief in the destiny of the departed, and to this day gifts of food and clothing are still made by Zoroastrian and Brahman alike for the benefit of souls in Paradise. This anomaly existed already in ancient times, for it is plain that both Vedic Indians and pagan Iranians believed that the blessed obtain "not only long life there by the gift of the mercy of the gods; they obtain the merit of . . . the sacrifices which they have offered, and the gifts which they have given to the priest, and at the same time they are nourished by the piety of their relatives on earth, as they have nourished in their turn their forefathers".[59] The spirits thus enjoy offerings made directly to them in the present, in ritual manner, or given to priests on their behalf. If food, for example, is placed abundantly before priests, the soul in heaven benefits.[60] Among the Iranians it is likewise held that food given ritually to a dog, who in a mysterious way represents the spirit world, will reach the departed soul.[61]

The rites for the soul are especially numerous in the first year after death. During this time the spirit was called in India a *preta*, a "departed one", and was thought of as not yet fully accepted into the community of the Fathers.[62] Exactly the same belief persisted among Zoroastrians, namely that the newly-departed soul led at first a somewhat separate existence. The responsibility for performing the rites on its behalf devolved upon the dead man's next-of-kin or heir, and he should maintain them for at least 30 years.[63] These three decades may be regarded simply

[59] Keith, *Rel. and phil.* II, 408.
[60] See Oldenberg, *Rel.* 535-6; Boyce, *BSOAS* XXXI, 1968, 285-6. Cf. the similar Buddhist usage referred to by Keith, loc. cit.
[61] See further below in Ch. 6.
[62] See Keith, *Rel. and phil.* II, 412-3; Gonda, *Rel. Indiens* I, 135.
[63] See Modi, *CC*, 334-5; Boyce, art. cit., 272; and further Ch. 12, Excursus.

as the span of a generation, each son thus performing the rites for his father; but it is a striking fact, pointed out long ago by A. Kaegi,[64] that many Indian and Iranian rituals concerning the dead occur in triplicate or in multiples of three. Comparing these practices with similar ones among the Greeks and other Indo-European peoples, he argued for their great ancientness, "the religious feeling of antiquity . . . being most deeply expressed and richly developed in catholic ministrations";[65] and the immense conservatism generally of the Indians and Iranians, and the similarity of their traditions in these matters, makes it virtually certain that living observances are still essentially those of ancient days. Among the Zoroastrians the initial rituals, which are many and prolonged, last for three days, during which the soul is thought to remain near the place of death or disposal of the body.[66] At this time the family fasts (or now, since the Zoroastrians disapprove of fasting, abstains from flesh), and in pagan days undoubtedly gave themselves up to demonstrations of grief.[67] On the third night three religious offices are said for the soul, during which a complete suit of clothing is consecrated for its use.[68] On the third day an animal sacrifice is offered on behalf of the soul and the fat offering from it is given to fire on the fourth day at sunrise, when the soul is drawn up with the sun's rays to make the journey to its new abode.[69] Offerings are consecrated for it daily during the first 30 days, after which a second blood sacrifice takes place; and then offerings are made every 30th day (or month by month) until the end of the first year (formerly 360 days). Then another solemn ritual is performed with a third animal sacrifice, and offerings again of food and clothing. This concludes the observances of the first year. After that there is an annual ceremony with consecration of food-offerings year by year upon the day of death, for the thirty stipulated years.

The above are evidently the old essential rituals, since they were in the

[64] A. Kaegi, "Die Neunzahl bei den Ostariern", *Philologische Abhandlungen Heinrich Schweiger-Sidler zur Feier*, Zürich 1891, 50-70 (a reference I owe to the kindness of Professor R. E. Emmerick).
[65] Ibid., 50.
[66] With regard to the whereabouts of the soul during this time, the Zoroastrian authorities differ as to whether this was at the place of death, or the *dakhma*, or the nearest sacred fire. On the Zoroastrian rituals see Kaegi, art. cit., 57 ff.; Modi, *CC*, 72-82, 402-4; A. V. W. Jackson, *Persia past and present*, 387-96; Söderblom, *ERE* IV, 502-4. On the Indian ones see Kaegi, ibid., 51-7; W. Caland, *Altindischer Ahnencult*, Leiden 1893.
[67] Wild demonstrations of grief among the Achaemenian Persians and other Iranians are nevertheless sometimes described by the Greek historians, see, e.g., Herodotus IX.24.
[68] See Modi, *CC*, 81; Jackson, op. cit., 395 with n. 1.
[69] Nowadays it is Parsi practice, which is being adopted also by the Irani Zoroastrians, to offer sandalwood to a sacred fire at dawn on the fourth day, instead of this ancient form of *zōhr*, on which see further in Ch. 6.

main observed by Brahman and Zoroastrian alike; but naturally they have often been elaborated in the case of an exalted person. Thus Arrian relates that a horse-sacrifice was made every month at the tomb of Cyrus the Great[70]—the sacrifice which according to the Vedas ensured the spirit a place near the sun. This observance, he states, was instituted in the reign of Cyrus' son Cambyses, and maintained continually by the same family of priests until the conquest by Alexander, a period of some 200 years. In modern times the annual ceremony for the soul of a great man has sometimes likewise been maintained over a long period. The most notable instance is that of the great Parsi priest, Dastur Meherji Rana, who died in the late 16th century A.C., for his anniversary ceremony is still performed by his lineal descendants in Navsari. The whole Zoroastrian community still keeps the annual observance for the soul of Zoroaster himself, which has thus been maintained over a span of perhaps three thousand years. The general practice, however, is that after a period of thirty years the departed soul receives only its share of the offerings and rites which are dedicated to "all souls", that is, to the great company of the *fravašis* of the righteous, known in Middle Iranian as *ardāy fravaš* or *ardāy fravahr*.[71]

Each year in ancient Iran a great festival was held which was dedicated to all the *fravašis*. This was known by the still unexplained name of Hamaspathmaēdaya,[72] and took place (like the festival of the dead in various other lands) on the last night of the year.[73] During the Sasanian

[70] *Anabasis* VI.29.7.

[71] *Fravahr* (later reduced to *frōhr, frōhar*) is a Middle Iranian dialect form of Av. *fravaši*, OP **fravarti*. *Ardāy Fravaš* has sometimes been treated by Western scholars as a *yazad*, a divine being representing all the departed souls of the righteous, as Gəuš Urvan represents all the departed souls of ritually-slain animals (see, e.g., J. and Th. Baunack, *Studien auf dem Gebiete der griechischen und der arischen Sprachen*, Leipzig 1888, 1/2, 437; Gray, *Foundations*, 137); but the Zoroastrian liturgies show that this is a misconception. Every religious service has its introduction or *dībāče*, composed in Middle Persian, which contains its dedication in anticipation of the Avestan dedication uttered in the course of the ceremony itself; and wherever an act of worship is declared in Avestan to be *ašaonąm fravašinąm* "of the *fravašis* of the just", then according to the Middle Persian it belongs to *ardāy fravaš*. More strikingly still, where the Av. formula contains the words *vispaēšąm ašaonąm fravašinąm*, the MP equivalent is *vispaēša ardāy fravaš* "of all the righteous *fravaš*". The MP dedication for services solemnized on Farvardīn Rōz, the day devoted to all the *fravašis*, is likewise to *ardāy fravaš*. In the MP translation of the *yasna* the phrase *ašaonąm fravašayō* is similarly rendered by *ardāy fravard*. According to *Zādspram* X.3 (ed. BTA, 61-2/lxxxvii, transl. West, *SBE* XLVII, 145, as XVI.3), the female divinities Spendārmad and Ardvīsūr were sent down to earth to guard the infant Zoroaster, together with *ardāy fravard*, that is, the *fravašis* of the righteous; West's comment, loc. cit. n. 2., that these three names represent "three female spirits" is slightly misleading.

[72] None of the earlier attempts at analysing this word have met with general acceptance, see Bartholomae, *Air. Wb.* 1776. Herzfeld's subsequent attempt to link it with Av. *spādha* "army" is also unconvincing.

[73] For some parallels in other cultures see Moulton, *EZ*, 263.

period, because of confusions arising from calendar-changes, the observance was greatly extended and came to last 10 days.[74] These days were named "the *fravaši* days", *Rōzān Fravardīgān*; and it is as Fravardīgān or Farvardīgān that the festival is now best known. Apart from this alteration in duration and name, the Iranian feast of All Souls appears to have changed hardly at all down the centuries. *Yt.*13.49-52 describes it in the following words:[75] "We worship the good, mighty, bounteous *fravašis* of the just, who hasten to (their) homes at the time of Hamaspathmaēdaya, then they wander here for the *whole night, wanting to experience this help: 'Who will praise us, who worship, who sing, who bless (us)? Who will acknowledge (us) with hands holding meat and clothing, with *aša*-attaining worship? The name of which of us will here be praised, the soul of which of *us will be worshipped, to which of us will that gift be given, whereby there shall be for him [i.e. the giver] inexhaustible food for ever and ever?' Then whichever man worships them . . . him they bless, contented . . . 'In that house there shall be troops of cattle and men, there shall be a fleet horse and strong *chariot, there shall be a *steadfast, eloquent man, who will worship us again with hands holding meat and clothing, with *aša*-attaining worship'". The festival is described in the following terms in a late Zoroastrian text:[76] "All the *fravašis* (then) come down on this earth and they all go back to their own (former) abodes . . . Hence it is necessary for men that (during) these . . . days they should put fragrant perfumes on the fire and should praise the souls, and perform the *myazd* and *āfrīnagān* and recite the Avesta so that those souls may be in comfort, joy and delight, and may confer blessings. And . . . during those . . . days they should not engage themselves in any other thing except in doing duties and good works, so that the souls may go back to their places with delight and pronounce benedictions." Further the historian Al-Bīrūnī wrote of the Zoroastrian festival as follows:[77] "During this time people put food in the halls of the dead and drink on the roofs of the houses, believing that the spirits of their dead . . . come out from the places of their reward or their punishment, that they go to the dishes laid out for them, imbibe their strength and suck their taste. They fumigate their houses with juniper that the dead may enjoy its smell. The spirits of the pious men dwell among their families, children and relations, and occupy

[74] See Boyce, "On the calendar of Zoroastrian feasts", *BSOAS* XXXIII, 1970, 513 ff., and especially 519-22.

[75] On these lines see ibid., 521-2.

[76] *Saddar Bundahišn* LII, ed. Dhabhar, 125, transl. Dhabhar, *Rivāyats*, 542-3. On the festival as observed among the Parsis see Modi, *CC*, 437-50.

[77] *The Chronology of Ancient Nations*, ed. Sachau, 224.

themselves with their affairs, although invisible to them". Still today, in both the Parsi and Irani communities, houses are meticulously cleaned and made ready for the annual coming of the spirits, ritual offerings of food and clothing are laid out in an especially pure place, and a lamp is lit there to welcome them, which burns throughout the hours of darkness during the whole festival. The presence of the spirits is strongly felt by the living, and a sense of happiness and family piety informs the festival, with hardly any touch of that ancient dread associated with contact with the other world. Nevertheless Mithra, the great warrior and protector, was especially invoked, before the *fravašis* themselves, in the night-offices of the festival;[78] and there is a rite practised still in Iran at the end of the feast to bid the spirits farewell, which seems to have about it an ancient element of exorcism.[79] At the first faint light of dawn on New Year's Day a fire is lit on every roof and Avesta is chanted. As daylight grows stronger, it is believed, the *fravašis* steadily withdraw until by the time the sun rises they have departed utterly.[80] Nowadays they are thought to ascend, rising up through the air to their heavenly home; but presumably in remote, pagan antiquity they were held to retire again, before the sun's rays reached them, into the kingdom of shadows beneath the earth. That the *fravašis* are in general associated with the hours of darkness, like spirits of the dead the world over, is shown by the fact that Hamaspathmaēdaya appears originally to have been a festival of the night. Moreover, in every twenty-four-hour day one watch is dedicated to the *fravašis*, namely *Aiwisrūthra*, the time between sunset and midnight.[81] There is something a little baneful about this period, for the powers of evil seem felt to be gathering strength during it, before the forces of good rally to smite them during *Ušah*, the watch from midnight to dawn, which for Zoroastrians is under the protection of Sraoša.[82] It is forbidden in their usage to solemnise any of the high rituals in *Aiwisrūthra*, or even to make preparations for them. If *haoma* is to be made ready, or water drawn, or milk procured, these things must be done in the daylight hours, or under the protection of Sraoša, but not while the *fravašis* are abroad.

It was natural that darkness should have been dreaded, and that there

[78] See *Nīrangestān*, ed. D. P. Sanjana, fol. 53 V 1 f., transl. S. J. Bulsara, *Aērpatastān and Nīrangastān*, 115 with n. 3.

[79] Lommel, *Die Yäšt's*, 108, saw a possible element of exorcism in the use of sweet-smelling substances placed on the fire (as reported by Bīrūnī); but it is in fact general practice in all Zoroastrian ceremonies to create fragrance to delight the divine beings and spirits. See, e.g. Moulton, *EZ*, 285; Modi, *CC*, 301-2.

[80] See Boyce, art. cit., 519. The custom is now maintained only in villages.

[81] See *Y.* 1.6 et passim.

[82] On the Zoroastrian divisions of the 24 hours see Ch. 10, below.

should have been fear also of the spirits which inhabited it. In the Vedas one finds this fear more marked than among the Zoroastrians, as presumably it was also in pagan Iran; but, as has been pointed out, although there was constant anxiety lest injury come from the dead, this was due not to direct fear of the spirits of the dead, but rather to fear of death itself. "The dead has not a hostile nature, but the thing which has affected him is to be feared".[83] Men cared for their forefathers, and supposed them eager to aid them. It is only when they are not duly worshipped that the departed may be dangerous to their descendants; and even then it is suggested (in the Zoroastrian tradition at least) that their reaction is less anger at neglect of themselves than grief that, not having been honoured, they are then powerless to help their descendants.[84] The same appears broadly true of the Vedic approach to the *pitaras*; and yet banning formulas occur explicitly in Indian rituals. Thus at the monthly ritual for departed souls, after the food-offerings have been made the following words are uttered: "Depart, ye Fathers . . . on your ancient deep paths; but return a month later to our house to eat the offering, with wealth in offspring, in heroes".[85]

It is in the spirit of this ancient formula, which both bids the spirits go and yet invokes their blessing, that at the end of their festival of All Souls (*Muktād* or *Farvardigān*) Parsis today still sometimes utter the words "Old people and new children" *(junāñ doslāñ ane navāñ čhokrāñ)*,[86] thus expressing the hope that the next year it will be only the "old" souls who return, there having been no more deaths, but that new children will have been born to the house. It is natural that the departed should be thought of as concerned to continue the family, for it is through the birth of descendants that offerings and rites will be maintained on their behalf. Hence it is said of the *fravašis*: "It is by their splendour and glory that females conceive children . . . give birth easily, have a wealth of children" (*Yt.*13.15); and still today among Zoroastrians the *fravašis* are especially invoked at the time of marriage.[87] Attributing to them care for the survival of the family is linked with regarding the *fravašis* as protective spirits

[83] Keith, *Rel. and phil.* II, 425. In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, II.1.3.1 ff. "it is said that the fathers, living in the south, do not have evil dispelled from them *(anapahata-pāpman)*. To them belongs the night, while the day belongs to the gods" (Rodhe, *Deliver us from evil*, 51).

[84] See *Šāyest nē-šāyest*, IX.13 (ed. Tavadia, 123).

[85] See Keith, *Rel. and phil.* II, 412; Arbman, art. cit. I, 371.

[86] See Dara S. Meherji Rana, *Nodh ane Nuktačīnī*, Bombay 1939, 73, describing usage at Navsari in the 20th century (a reference for which I am indebted to Dr. Firoze M. Kotwal). The final ceremony in question is the large *stūm* consecrated at midday on Rōz Khordād, Māh Farvardīn; and the wish is expressed by those attending on behalf of the family concerned.

[87] See Boyce, *BSOAS* XXXI, 271 n. 4.

in general, who help their descendants to live and thrive. "Then when the waters flow out from the sea Vourukaša, then the mighty *fravašis* of the just advance, many, many hundreds, many, many thousands, many, many tens of thousands, seeking each to obtain water for her own family, for her own village, for her own tribe, for her own country" (*Yt.*13.65). And each, gaining the life-giving water, drives it away before her in rain-clouds, saying: "May our land flourish and grow" (*Yt.*13.68).[88]

Yet even when the *fravašis* are thus portrayed as cherishing and protective, what may be assumed to be their primary heroic role is not wholly eclipsed. Their striving to obtain water, each for her own people, is described in the following terms: "They fight our battles (each) in her own place and abode, where (each) had had a place and dwelling to inhabit, even as a mighty chariot-warrior should fight, having girt on his sword-belt, for his well-gotten treasure" (*Yt.*13.67).[89] Further it is said: "Then when a powerful ruler of the land is threatened from before hostile foes, he calls on them, the powerful *fravašis* of the just. They shall come to him to help, if they are not angered by him . . .; they are made to fly down to him like well-winged birds. They serve him as weapon and arms . . . so that, on account of this, not a well-drawn dagger, not a well-swung mace, not a well-strung arrow, not a well-darted spear or hurled stone shall reach its mark" (*Yt.*13.69-72). The *fravašis* are "to be invoked in victories, invoked in battles" (*Yt.*13.23); and in the Zoroastrian tradition of Angra Mainyu's assault upon the world the *fravašis* of the just are said to have been drawn up to withstand his attack upon the sky as warriors with spear in hand, like guards over a fortress.[90]

The *fravašis* thus help in war, and they give aid also in peace. They are "givers of . . . a boon to the eager, of health to the sick, givers of good fortune to him who invokes them, worshipping, satisfying, bringing offerings" (*Yt.*13.24). In fact, like the Indian *pitaras*, the *fravašis* receive reverence and supplication in very much the same way as the gods themselves, and are held to have the same capacity to answer prayers and bestow boons. It seems probable that protective powers, perhaps early attributed to the heroic departed, were magnified with the development of the doctrine that blessed souls might hope to dwell with the gods themselves in heaven, so that they acquired divine attributes by this association.[91]

[88] It is evidently because of this link between the *fravašis* and the life-giving water that a number of verses from the hymn to Arədvī Sūrā (*Yt.* 5) have been attracted to their cult, and form part of the beginning of *Yt.* 13.

[89] Lommel, in attributing the original concept of the *fravašis* to Zoroaster, explained such primitive-seeming passages as later accretions (*Die Yāšt's*, 108).

[90] *GBd.* VI a.3 (transl. BTA, 70).

This leads us to the vexed question of the history of the belief that the *fravaši* not only lives after the death of a person on earth, but has had a pre-existence as a spirit before that person was born—that it is in fact as immortal as the gods. As a group the *fravašis* are represented as present at the creation of the world; and in the Zoroastrian version of their hymn Ahura Mazdā declares that it was by their splendour and glory that he set in order the creations of sky and water, earth and plants, cattle and men (*Yt.*13.1-11). "If the mighty *fravašis* of the just had not given me help, there would not now have been cattle and men . . ." (*Yt.*13.12); and it is through them that the world is kept in growth and motion (*Yt.*13.14,16). The verses which describe these functions of the *fravašis* are in part heavily Zoroastrianised; yet there is good reason to think that the doctrine of the six creations is older than the prophet's teachings,[92] and it is very probable that the *fravašis* were associated with it before his time. Some scholars have even held that "the idea of pre-existence . . . is a fundamental one in connexion with the *Fravashis*",[93] but this seems a more doubtful proposition. As we have seen, the concept of the *fravaši* suggests the cult both of hero and ancestor, and it was presumably in a large measure the product of popular and family piety; whereas speculation about pre-existence and the creation of the world is much more likely to have evolved in priestly schools (for although his future fate may be of deep concern to the ordinary man, what has gone before this present life is little likely to engage his thoughts). The doctrine that the departed ancestors, at least of the great, had their dwelling with the gods appears to have developed in Indo-Iranian times, since it is common to the two peoples; but that of the six creations has no close parallel in Vedic India, and was probably the result of cosmogonic speculation by Iranian priests. It seems likely that there evolved along with this speculation the doctrine of the pre-existence of souls, who being now potentially godlike were held to share the immortality of the gods, stretching backward as well as forward in time; and since the *fravašis* were the mightiest members of the kingdom of the dead, this doctrine, it seems, came to be linked explicitly with them rather than with the *urvan*. Presumably then, since they were also the especial protectors of men, a part was attributed to them in shaping the world in which men were to dwell. According to this interpretation, belief in the

[91] See Keith, *Rel. and phil.* II, 425; Oldenberg, *Rel.*, 548. In India, however, the rituals are carefully differentiated when the fathers and when the gods are the object of sacrifice, see Hillebrandt, *Rituallitteratur*, 114 f.

[92] See in more detail in the following chapter.

[93] A. V. W. Jackson apud Moulton, *EZ*, 272.

pre-existence of the *fravašis* must be held to have evolved gradually during the pagan Iranian period, rather than being fundamental to their concept.[94]

The developed doctrine came to be that each *fravaši* existed from the beginning of time in a spiritual *(mēnōg)* state; that in due course it was born, clad in a physical body, into this world; and that after death it lived once more in a spiritual state, to be re-united again ultimately with its resurrected physical body. In both the second and third states the *fravaši* tended to be identified with the *urvan*, as these concepts merged .The question then was pondered as to which, in the present state of the world, was the most powerful, the unborn *fravaši*, or that of a living person, or that of a dead one? This again suggests the theorising of priestly schools rather than a point of any popular concern. The Zoroastrian answer was that the *fravašis* of the great men of the faith, whether already dead or not yet born, were the most powerful, but that otherwise the *fravašis* of the living were the strongest (*Yt*.13.17)—a doctrine which seems to reflect the profound universal instinct that it is better to be alive in the flesh in the present familiar world than to exist in any other state. In the *Farvardīn Yašt* one finds the idea of possessing a *fravaši* apparently greatly extended, probably through the identification of *fravaši* with *urvan*. As we have seen, in the *Yasna Haptaŋhāiti* the souls, *urvan*, of useful animals are reverenced; but in *Yt*.13 (v.154) it is the *fravašis* of these creatures which are invoked; and in this hymn even the gods themselves are held to have *fravašis*, including (in the Zoroastrian redaction) Ahura Mazdā and the Aməša Spəntas (vv.80-6). Of this development Lommel has justly observed:[95] "That a *fravaši* . . . should be attributed to purely spiritual divine persons remains wholly incomprehensible to us. That would then have to signify, if anything, some sort of spiritual sublimation of the spiritual gods. And that is inconceivable. The suspicion is awakened that these, the highest beings, have been brought into the formula of invocation of the *fravašis* mechanically, simply in order to set them at the head of the beings to be duly adored". As he further points out,[96] a mounting tendency to seek to embrace everything within this formula led finally to the tautalogy that the *fravašis* of *fravašis* came to be invoked (v.156). This was presumably a late development of priestly pedantry.[97]

[94] There are in fact some scholars who hold that it developed even later, within Zoroastrianism itself, see Söderblom, *RHR* XXXIX, 405.

[95] *Die Yäšt's*, 110. See also Corbin, *Eranos Jahrbuch* XX, 1951, 170-1; XXII, 1953, 105.

[96] *Die Yäšt's*, 110 n. 1.

[97] There is a curious statement in the *Mēnōg ī Khrad* (a text probably compiled in the 6th century A.C.), XLIX.22 that the uameless and unnumbered stars represent the *fravašis* of earthly beings *(gēthyā)*; but this appears to be isolated and unreconciled with general doctrine.

The cult and literature of the *fravašis* thus shows many layers of growth. Not only does there seem to be the slow accretion of priestly dogma around a core of popular belief and custom, but also an amalgamation of such beliefs, with the fusing of a general cult of the departed spirit, the *urvan*, with worship of the heroic dead. The result of such fusions and developments was a tangle of curious anomalies, which have been vividly summarised by Söderblom:[98] "Two things, apparently contradictory, characterise the existence of the *fravašis*; on the one hand their wretched state, on the other their superhuman power. The dead depend upon the liberality of the living; among themselves they are poor and unhappy. They hasten eagerly to eat and drink what is offered them, and they have need of clothing to protect themselves against cold and shame. Why are these offerings made them? Out of love for a loved being, now vanished . . . But love, attachment, is not the only motive, and not even the constant motive behind funerary practices. The increase of the family, the irrigation of fields, the nourishing of plants, the prosperity of herds and man, all that is of worth in life depends upon them. Their power is unlimited, and becomes baneful for those who do not fulfil their duties towards them . . . Yet the power of the dead, although it inspires so much respect and fear, is not enviable; no one would wish to be dead to possess it. It offers no consolation for the loss of this life and does not make death less sad or less dreadful". Although this complexity of belief arose partly, it seems, from the blending of the cults of *fravaši* and *urvan*, a broad distinction between the two concepts persists in Zoroastrian observance, and seems to be felt without the aid of theological argument. This is that one prays *for* the *urvan*, but *to* the *fravaši*, since the former needs man's help, whereas the latter, if duly venerated, becomes his protector. The *fravašis* are accordingly invoked in every Zoroastrian act of worship, no matter to which individual divine being this is specifically dedicated; and this probably perpetuates very ancient usage.

[98] Art. cit., 413-5.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE NATURE OF THE WORLD AND ITS ORIGINS

There are many indications in the Avesta of the character of ancient Iranian beliefs about the nature of the world and its origins. Some of the most important occur in what appear to be oldest parts of the "great" *yašts*, and for this reason alone the ideas concerned can be attributed with fair certainty to the pagan period. They also agree in a number of respects with Vedic notions.[1] In other points, however, they diverge from Indian concepts; and in general the Iranian theories show considerable systematisation, which suggests intensive thought and study in priestly schools. The results of this intellectual activity fortunately survive in unusual completeness and clarity in the Pahlavi work called *Bundahišn* or "Creation".[2] This is a compilation concerned mainly with cosmogony and cosmology, which derives directly from lost parts of the Avesta itself together with their later commentary or *zand*. Its most ancient layers of material can usually be identified as such, since direct quotations from the Avesta are introduced by a standard formula, *pad dīn gōwēd* "in the Religion he (i.e. Zoroaster) says";[3] and this scriptural matter accords admirably with incidental allusions in the surviving Avestan texts themselves.

[1] Indian ideas on cosmography are set out in detail by W. Kirfel, *Die Kosmographie der Inder nach den Quellen dargestellt*, Bonn und Leipzig, 1920.

[2] The text of this work was edited by T. D. Anklesaria, *The Bundahishn*, Bombay 1908; and transcribed and translated by B. T. Anklesaria, *Zand-Ākāsīh, Iranian* or *Greater Bundahišn*, Bombay 1956. References here are given, by chapter, paragraph and page-number, to this translation (which is accompanied by the folio numbers of TDA's edition). A facsimile of the text, from a better manuscript, was published in Tehran in 1971, as *The Bondahesh, being a facsimile edition of the manuscript TD I, Iranian Culture Foundation* No. 88. The "Indian Bundahišn" is a shorter version of the same work, deriving from a different manuscript tradition. Its text was published with a German translation by F. Justi, *Der Bundehesh*, Leipzig 1868; and an English translation, with valuable notes, by E. W. West appeared in *SBE* V, 1901. Many of the passages cited below were transcribed and translated by Nyberg, "Questions de cosmogonie et de cosmologie mazdéennes", *JA* 1929, 193-310; 1931, 1-134; and by Zaehner, *Zurvan*. A condensed account of the story of creation is given in *Pahl. Riv. Dd.* XLVI (ed. Dhabhar, 127-37, transl. H. K. Mirza, London thesis, 1940).

[3] On this phrase see Henning, *JRAS* 1942, 231 n. 8. He understood the "he" implied in *gōwēd* to be Ohrmazd himself; but the phrase so often introduces words or acts attributed to the Creator in the third person that it seems more probable that the speaker is regarded as Zoroaster, the prophet to whom God revealed all things, and who is held therefore to be the author of the whole Avesta.

The ancient theories about the nature of the world which are enshrined in the *Bundahišn* appear closely linked with Zoroaster's own doctrines, and indeed seem in a measure to have provided the basis for these. Yet since the prophet was himself so markedly and dominantly a moral thinker, inspired by his own immediate vision of the divine, there is a general probability that in matters concerning the physical world he accepted existing hypotheses rather than evolving theories of his own—that it was other thinkers before him who strove to understand the nature of creation, his own preoccupation being rather with its purpose. This probability is strengthened by the fact that the Zoroastrian version of the cosmogony shows certain anomalies, as if ancient amoral doctrines had been adapted by Zoroaster to convey his own wholly ethical interpretation of world history. The physical ideas underlying his doctrines may be safely presumed therefore to have existed already before his day, to be learnt by him in the *zaotar* schools in which he studied.

The ancient Iranian world-picture appears a coherent and orderly one, although there are abundant indications that formerly different theories about creation existed, from which an accepted doctrine was gradually evolved. According to the *Bundahišn* the cosmos was brought into being through a series of six creations—although to whose agency this was attributed in pagan times, or in what manner it was brought about, remains unknown. In the Avesta the verb used for the act of establishing the sky, waters and earth is *vidāraya-*,[4] which means "arrange, regulate" rather than "make"; and in the Vedas too a metaphor for building (rather than evolving) is often used of creation.[5] In the Avesta the verbs *thwarəs-* and *taš-* are employed for animate things, and these have the sense of "shape by cutting, carve, fashion", so that in their case too it seems to be assumed that the raw material already existed. The presence in the Iranian pantheon of the divinity Gəuš Tašan "Shaper of the Bull" suggests that in pagan times acts of creation were attributed to a number of gods, rather than there being one deity who was regarded as the creator. We have seen that the Iranian *Vouruna was regarded as a creator god; and in India Varuṇa is represented as having established heaven and earth, although the creation of different parts of the world is ascribed to diverse gods, Indra among them. Indeed in the Vedic hymns "certain great cosmic functions are predicated of nearly every leading deity individually. The action of supporting or establishing heaven is so generally attributed to

[4] See, e.g., *Yt.* 13.2,4,9.

[5] See A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, Strassburg 1899, 11.

them that in the Atharvaveda (19.32) it is even ascribed to a magical bunch of . . . grass".[6]

The first of the Iranian creations, according to established doctrine, was that of the "sky".[7] This was conceived as an empty shell, perfectly round,[8] and made of stone, which enclosed everything, passing beneath the earth as well as framing the space above it. The idea that the sky was made of stone appears to be Indo-European;[9] and in Iranian languages the various words for "sky" (Av. *asmān*) originally meant simply "stone" or "stones".[10] In *Y*.30.5 Zoroaster himself refers to the sky as being of "hardest stones" *(khraoždištāng asənō)*; and the tradition shows that this celestial substance was identified as rock-crystal[11] (a hypothesis comparable with the Greek theory of the crystal spheres). This appears a reasonable scholastic essay in early physics, for the clear sky over Central Asia and Iran often seems to have the hardness and definition of crystal, as well as sharing its capacity to take on different and exquisite colours. Matters were complicated, however, by the fact that in the Iranian priestly schools rock-crystal came to be classified also as a "metal"—no doubt because of its brightness and because it, like precious metals, is won by quarrying veins within rock. The sky can therefore be said to be made of either stone or metal. In what appears to be a fundamentally old part of the *Farvardīn Yašt* (*Yt*.13.2) it is described as being "in the form of bright metal" *(ayaŋhō kəhrpa khvaēnahe)*; and both definitions are offered in the Pahlavi books. Thus in the *Dādestān ī dīnīg*, *Pursišn* XC, the sky is said to have "visible brightness, being stone, of all stones the hardest and most beautiful";[12] whereas in the *Bundahišn* it is described as "light, visible,

[6] Ibid., 15.

[7] *GBd*. I.54 et pass. The creations are given in their order in several Avestan passages, of which the oldest are probably those in *Yt*. 13, see vv. 2-10 et seq. In *GBd*. I a.3 (BTA, 21) it is said that "first the entire creation was a drop of water"; but this seems to reflect a more sophisticated development of later (probably Parthian or Sasanian) times.

[8] *GBd*. I a.6 (BTA, 23).

[9] See most recently H. Biezais, "Der steinerne Himmel", *Ann. Acad. Reg. Scient. Upsaliensis* IV, 1960, 5-28, with references to particular studies in the Iranian field. Kuiper, *IIJ* VIII, 1964, 106 ff., argues from the Vedic material that in India there was no concept of a stone sky, but rather that "during the night the nether world was thought of as hanging over the earth *in an inverted position*" (p. 116). Indo-Iranian priestly speculations seem, however, based largely on analogy; and to the writer it appears improbable (and not adequately substantiated by the texts) that the Vedic Indians should have thought that the stone basin which held the sea could be nightly turned upside down over their heads without the water spilling down from it and drowning the earth, in accord with well-known physical laws. For Vedic ideas of a round "world" enclosed by an upper and a lower bowl see Kirfel, *Kosmographie*, 4*-10*.

[10] For references to discussions of this word and its cognates see Bailey, *Zor. Problems*, 124 n. 1.

[11] See the masterly exposition by Bailey, op. cit., Ch. IV.

[12] Transl. by Bailey, op. cit., 126.

very distant, of the substance of bright metal";[13] and in a later passage of the same work it is declared that "the firmness of metal is from the sky, the true substance *(bun gōhr)* of the sky is metallic".[14] This hard "sky" enclosing the world is compared in the Pahlavi texts to a storehouse containing all necessary things, and also frequently to a fortress that guards what is within it.[15] Its protective nature is further indicated by a simile in *Yt*.13.2, where it is said to be "upon and around this earth just like a bird (upon) an egg".[16]

The second creation was that of water,[17] which was thought of as filling the lower part of the globular "sky"; and the third that of earth. "And the water remained everywhere beneath this earth".[18] The creation of earth is described as being in three stages,[19] and perhaps Hertel was right when, comparing Indian and Iranian traditions, he suggested that the myth of Yima enlarging the earth derives from an older one of the gradual creation of land out of muddy water.[20] The surface of the earth was conceived as having been originally a round plane, filling like a flat dish the exact centre of the "sky".[21] From its surface there grew up in time mountains, which were thought of as having "roots" like plants, that went deep down under the ground.[22] The first and greatest of these mountains was Harā bərəzaitī, Pahlavi Harburz, Persian Alburz, the "lofty Watchpost",[23] a great range encircling the rim of the still flat earth. It is said in *Yt*.19.1: "As the first mountain there stood upon this earth high Harā, which encircles entirely the eastern lands and the western lands". The *Bundahišn* describes its growth in the following terms: "The first mountain which grew up was fortunate Harburz; from that, afterwards, all mountains grew up . . . Harburz kept growing till the fulness of 800 years: 200 years to the star-region, 200 years to the moon-region, 200 years to the sun-region, 200 years to the height of heaven".[24] (As this quotation shows, in

[13] *GBd*. I a.6 (BTA, 23). This passage evidently depends closely on Yt. 13.2 or on a similar Avestan passage.

[14] *GBd*. III.16 (BTA, 43). For *bun* in the sense of "true" see Benveniste, *Rev. Études Arméniennes* I, 1964, 7-9.

[15] See, e.g., *GBd*. I a.6 (BTA, 23).

[16] See Henning, *Asiatica, Festschrift F. Weller*, Leipzig 1954, 289-92.

[17] See, e.g., *GBd*. I.54 (BTA, 19).

[18] *GBd*. I a. 10 (BTA, 25).

[19] *GBd*. I a.9 (on which passage see Bailey, *Zor. Problems* 137 n. 2).

[20] J. Hertel, *Die Himmelstore im Veda und im Awesta*, 23 ff., and cf. Lommel, *Die Yāšt's*, 196-7. On this myth see above, p. 93.

[21] *GBd*. I a.8 (BTA, 23-5). For comparable Indian ideas see Kirfel, *Kosmographie*, 10* ff.

[22] *GBd*. VI c.1 (BTA, 77).

[23] *GBd*. IX.1 (BTA, 93).

[24] *GBd*. IX.1-2 (BTA, 93).

the ancient cosmography the stars were regarded as nearer to the earth than moon and sun.) The concept of all-encompassing Harā has its parallel in the Indian one of *lōkālōka*, a ring of mountains surrounding all the continents of the earth.[25] The Iranians and Indians both thought that the world was divided into seven regions, called in Avestan *karšvar* (Pahl. *kešvar*), in Sanskrit *dvīpa*. These regions the Iranians held had developed when rain first fell upon the earth, breaking it into pieces.[26] The central region, which they called Khvaniratha,[27] was, they believed, as large as all the other six put together;[28] and this was the one inhabited by man. Zoroaster alludes to this belief in *Y*.32.3, where he says that by their deeds the *daēvas* had made themselves known "in the seventh part of the earth".[29] The Indians called this central region Jambūdvīpa, and thought of the other six as ring-shaped continents which formed hollow concentric circles around it, separated one from the other by oceans.[30] The Iranians held that each region was a solid circle, the six lesser ones being scattered around the "splendid clime of Khvaniratha",[31] but likewise cut off from it, although in various ways, by water, forest and rugged mountain.[32] To the east lay Arəzahi, to the west Savahi; to the north-east Vouru.barəšti, to the north-west Vouru.jarəšti; to the south-east Fradadhafšu, to the south-west Vīdadhafšu.[33]

In the very centre of the region inhabited by man both peoples held that there was a great mountain. The Indians called it Mount Mēru, or Sumēru.[34] In Iran it had various names. It was there thought to have grown up from the "roots" of encircling Harā (which ran all under the earth), and to be therefore a part of that great chain. It was accordingly called the "Peak *(Taēra)* of Harā"; and the Khotanese Sakas, when they became Buddhists, used this old name, "Peak of Harā" *(ttaira haraysä)*, to render Mt. Sumēru.[35] In Pahlavi it was often called simply Tērag, or

[25] See Kirfel, *Kosmographie*, and in brief L. D. Barnett, *Antiquities of India*, London 1913, 197.
[26] *GBd.* VIII.1 (BTA, 91).
[27] On a possible etymology of this name see Gershevitch, *AHM*, 176.
[28] *GBd.* VIII.1 (BTA, 91).
[29] The fact that the prophet knew this division of the world means that if Babylonian influence had been exerted in this matter (as has been maintained by a number of scholars, see Kirfel, *Kosmographie*, 28* ff.), this would have had to have taken place very early, perhaps through contacts with Mesopotamia in the 2nd millennium B.C.
[30] See Barnett, loc. cit. In fanciful later developments these oceans were said to be of such liquids as sugar-cane juice, clarified butter, milk and whey.
[31] *Yt.* 10.15.
[32] *GBd.* VIII.4 (BTA, 91); *Mēnōg i Khrad* IX.5.
[33] See, e.g., *GBd.* V b.7-10 (BTA, 65-7).
[34] See Kirfel, op. cit., 15*. This concept too is thought by some scholars to originate in Babylon, see ibid., 14*-15*, 31*.
[35] See Bailey, *Khotanese Texts* IV, Cambridge 1961, 12.

was referred to (since it is the most important part for man of the great mountain chain) just as Harā. Both Iranians and Indians believed that the heavenly bodies had their orbits in planes parallel to the earth, and that being below the "sky" they moved around this central mountain, which by intercepting their light caused night and day. It is "the Peak of high Harā . . . around which circle the stars and moon and sun" (*Yt.*12.25). "The sun is imagined to move in summer more slowly by day than by night, and in the winter more slowly by night than by day, the motions being only equal at the equinoxes, and on this is explained the difference in the length of day and night".[36] The Indo-Iranians shared evidently an ancient religious calendar divided into 360 days;[37] and in the Pahlavi texts it is said[38] that there were 180 windows on the eastern side of the Peak, 180 on the west; and that the sun came through an eastern window each day at dawn, and passed back through a western one at night. "When the sun comes out, it warms the *kešvars* of Arzah, Fradadafš and Vīdadafš, and half of Khvaniras. When it goes into the other side of the Peak, it warms the *kešvars* of Savah, Vourubarišn and Vourujarišn, and half of Khvaniras. When it is day here, it is night there".[39] In the *Mihr Yašt* it is said that "the sun goes forth across high Harā" (*Yt.*10.118)[40], and the Peak itself is described there as "much convoluted, shining . . . where is no night or darkness, no wind cold or hot, no deadly illness, no defilement . . . neither do mists arise" (*Yt.*10.50).[41]

Harā gives not only light but also water to the world (a belief that may well be older than the learned doctrine of the six creations). "Just as light comes in from Harburz and goes out from Harburz, water too comes in from Harburz and goes out from Harburz".[42] In *Vendidād* 21 there is an incantation that links light and the waters, high Harā and the sea Vourukaša. The name of this sea means "having many inlets"; and in Pahlavi it either appears as Varkaš, or more commonly is translated as Frākhvkard.[43] It was held to occupy "one third of the earth, to the

[36] Barnett, op. cit., 197-8.
[37] In India this was a lunar calendar, see, e.g., Barnett, loc. cit.; in ancient Iranian theory both sun and moon years were regarded as being 360 days in length. See most recently Boyce, *BSOAS* XXXIII, 1970, 513 ff.
[38] *GBd.* V b.3 (BTA, 65); *Pahl. Riv. Dd.*, LXV, see Bailey, *Zor. Problems*, 138; Boyce, art. cit., 515-6.
[39] *GBd.* V b.11 (BTA, 67).
[40] Cf. *Vd.* 21.5.
[41] It is evidently because of the connection between the sun and Harā that Mithra is said to have his abode upon the mountain, built for him there by the Immortals (*Yt.* 10. 50-1).
[42] *GBd.* XI.6 (BTA, 105).
[43] See Bartholomae, *Air. Wb.* 1429-30.

south, on the skirts of Harburz",[44] and to be "the gathering place of water" (*Vd.*21.15). Upon its shores the rain-god Tištrya fights Apaoša, and the *fravašis* congregate to win water for their kinsfolk. It is fed unfailingly by the mythical river *Harahvaitī, which is as large as all the other streams together which flow upon the earth.[45] This huge river pours down from the Peak of Harā into Vourukaša. "All the edges in the sea Vourukaša are troubled, all the centre is disturbed, when Arədvī Sūrā Anāhitā flows forth upon them, when she pours forth upon them" (*Yt.* 5.4). From the sea there flow out two great rivers, which form the eastern and western boundary *(hindu-)* of Khvaniratha.[46] The word *hindu-* (Skt. *sindhu-*), used thus to mean a river-frontier of the inhabited world, was also applied generally, it seems, to any big river which, like the Indus, formed a natural frontier between peoples or lands.[47] The specific names of the two mythical boundary rivers in Iranian tradition were the Vaŋhvī Dāityā, the "good Dāityā", which flowed to the east, and the Raŋha, which flowed to the west.[48] In Pahlavi they are known as the Veh Dāitī or Veh Rōd, "the river Veh" (the epithet "good" having been mistaken for the proper name), and the Arang.[49] According to the *Bundahišn*, these two rivers having passed round the earth are cleansed and return to Vourukaša (Frākhvkard), whence their waters are carried up once more to the Peak of Harā to descend again on the mythical sea, in perpetual motion.[50]

In the centre of Vourukaša there stands a mountain called Us.həndava, "Beyond the frontier" (presumably in this case the "frontier" formed by the waters of the sea itself)[51]. This mountain is said to be "of the bright metal which is the substance of the sky", that is, crystal;[52] and around its summit gather the vapours which as rain-clouds are distributed over the earth by Apąm Napāt and bold Vāta, by Khvarənah set in the waters, and by the *fravašis* of the just (*Yt.*8.34). Thus all the water that flows or falls in the world comes from the sea Vourukaša, which in turn has its source in the river *Harahvaitī Arədvī Sūrā, descending from high Harā.

[44] *GBd.* X.1 (BTA, 101).
[45] *Yt.* 5.3 = *Yt.* 13.6. On the later epithet for Anāhitā of **Bṛzi.harā* see above, p. 74 with n. 345.
[46] See *Yt.* 10.104.
[47] On both meaning and use of the word see Thieme, "Sanskrit *sindhu-/Sindhu* and Old Iranian *hindu-/Hindu-*", *Henning Memorial Volume*, 447-50.
[48] *GBd.* XI.1 (BTA, 105).
[49] On these two rivers and their identification in later times with actual rivers see Markwart, *Wehrot und Arang, Untersuchungen zur mythischen und geschichtlichen Landeskunde von Ostiran*, Leiden 1938.
[50] *GBd.* XI c.2 (BTA, 113-5), XXVIII.8 (BTA, 247.)
[51] See Thieme, art. cit., 449. (Otherwise Bailey, *Mithraic Studies* I, ed. Hinnells, 6 n., who takes *us.həndava* to mean "high place".)
[52] *GBd.* IX.8 (BTA, 95): *khvan-āhin, kē gōhr ī asmān.*

It is presumably because the Peak of Harā is of such inestimable benefit to the world, bestowing on it the life-giving sun and the waters, that it has the epithet Hukairya "of good activity" (Pahlavi Hukar); and this epithet is used as another name for the mountain. Haoma is said to worship Mithra "on the highest Peak on high Harā, which is called Hukairya by name" (*Yt.*10.88);[53] and the worshippers of Arədvī Sūrā praise "Mount Hukairya the verdant, which deserves all praise" (*Yt.*5.96). In the *Bundahišn* "the lofty Hukar, through which springs the water of Ardvīsūr" is called the "chief of summits".[54] Further, since this mountain was held to be the highest point on earth, it was natural that, once the doctrine had evolved that the souls of the happy dead ascended to Heaven, this should be regarded as the place from where their upward journey began. On it accordingly is said to rest one end of the Činvatō Pərətu, the Činvat Bridge; and when (presumably in accordance with Zoroaster's own teachings) the crossing of this bridge came to be regarded as depending solely on an ethical judgment, the Peak itself received yet another name, in Pahlavi the Čagād ī dāidīg, the "lawful Summit". In *Vd.*19.98 "the soul of the righteous one" is said to "go up above high Harā, above the Činvat Bridge"; and in the *Bundahišn* the explanation is given: "The Čagād ī dāidīg is that which is in the middle of the world . . . on which is the Činvat Bridge. The souls are judged at that place".[55]

The complexities of belief about Harā have led us away from the basic theme of the six creations, of which we have now considered three: sky, water and earth. The fourth creation was that of plants. There appear to have been various myths in the remote past about the origin of plant-life; but according to the *Bundahišn* the first green thing grew up in the middle of the earth (at the foot, presumably, of the Peak of Harā). This was a slender stem, "moist and milky", without twigs or bark or thorn, "and it had in its nature the power of plants of all kinds".[56] This curious object seems purely the product of priestly speculation, and has no name of its own, being called simply "the plant" *(urvar)*. A plainly more popular concept is that of a huge tree which is the source of renewal for all plants upon earth.[57] This grows in the middle of the sea Vourukaša, and is referred to in the *Vendidād* as "the well-watered Tree, on which grow all . . . plants of every kind, by hundreds, by thousands, by hundreds of thousands"

[53] Cf. *Yt.* 5.25, 9.8, 15.15 (Yima sacrifices to individual gods on Hukairya); *Yt.* 12. 23-5 (Rašnu is invoked "at Harā ... at Hukairya ... at the Peak of Harā").
[54] *GBd.* XVII.18 (BTA, 155).
[55] *GBd.* IX.9 (BTA, 95); cf. *Pahl. Riv. Dd.* XV.4.
[56] *GBd.* I a.11 (BTA, 25).
[57] On this tree see Windischmann, *Zor. Studien*, 165 ff.

(*Vd.*5.19). In *Yt.*12.17 it is called the Saēna Tree, because it is the perch of that great mythical bird; and also the Tree of All Remedies, because it bears the seeds of all healing herbs. In the Pahlavi books it is given various names: The Tree of All Seeds,[58] or the Tree of All Healing,[59] or the Tree Opposing Harm.[60] In the Zoroastrian account of creation it is said that when the Evil Spirit poisoned the original plant, making it wither,[61] the Immortal who cares for plants, Amərətāt, pounded it small, and its essence was scattered over the earth by rain, and from it grew all plants; and it was from the seeds of these, its first descendants, that the Tree of All Seeds grew up in Vourukaša.[62] This seems to be an artificial marrying of old popular myth with less picturesque priestly doctrines. Thereafter every year Tištrya takes up the seeds from the Tree with the waters, so that he may "rain (them) upon the world with the rain",[63] and renew the life of plants everywhere.

Close by the Tree of All Seeds in the sea Vourukaša stood, it is said, the other great tree of Iranian mythology, the "mighty Gaokərəna" (*Yt.* 1.30), Pahl.Gōkarn or Gōkart.[64] This is mentioned in the *Vendidād* (20.4) as being surrounded by healing plants; and the Pahlavi books explain that this tree is the "White Hōm",[65] the "chief of plants",[66] which confers long life upon whoever eats from it, holding back "short-breathed age",[67] and brings about the immortality of the resurrected bodies of the dead. There seems some confusion in the mythology between this tree of life and the Tree of All Seeds, for they grow close together, both are guarded by the *kar*-fish, and both are associated with healing plants. There appear to be old Indo-Iranian concepts behind these tree-myths, for the Indians held that there was a huge tree, the Jambū (giving its name to Jambūdvīpa), which grew at the south side of Mt. Mēru (Vourukaša lies at the south side of Harā), and was associated with *soma* and immortality, and also with healing herbs.[68]

The fifth creation was that of animals, which has its origin in the Uniquely-created Bull, the *Gav aēvō.dāta*, in Pahl. the *Gāv ī ēv-dād*, who was "white, bright like the moon, and three measured poles in height".[69] He, the first animal to live on earth, was slain. In the Zoroastrian version of the myth (which is the only one known from Iran), the Evil Spirit, Ahriman, killed him (just as he had shrivelled up the "plant"). Part of his seed was taken up to the moon, which has the epithet *gao.čithra* "having the seed of the Bull";[70] and from this seed, purified there, were born all species of beneficent animals. Part of it fell to the ground, and from it sprang many kinds of useful plants.[71] The anomalies of this myth in its Zoroastrian version have often been pointed out. Presumably in its original pagan form the Bull died as a sacrifice and its death was essentially a creative and useful act from which good resulted, namely the generation of all other good creatures and plants; possibly, as has been suggested, it was the prototype of the yearly sacrifice made at the autumn feast of Mithra, offered to renew life the following spring in pastures and herds.[72] In the Zoroastrian version of the six creations, however, although the Bull's death brings good, it is itself bad, brought about by the Evil Spirit. Even in what may be assumed to be the more coherent pagan version the springing of plants from the dying animal's seed duplicates the generation of plants in the myth of the fourth creation. This is doubtless an old anomaly, brought about by the schematisation of a diversity of myths.

According to the *Bundahišn* the Uniquely-created Bull lived its life on the bank of the river Veh Dāitī;[73] and on the opposite bank stood Gayō.marətan, Pahlavi Gayōmard, the mythical First Man.[74] He is also referred to occasionally in the Avesta simply as Gaya "Life"; but his full name means "Mortal Life", and it seems to have been given him in antithesis to the "immortal life" (Vedic *ámartya- gáya-*) of the gods.[75] Gayō.marətan is described as being "bright as the sun, and his height was four measured poles, and his breadth just as much as his height".[76] This curious figure has been strikingly compared[77] with the Vedic Mārtāṇḍa, "Mortal Seed"[78], who was between the gods and men, for he was himself semi-

[58] *GBd.* VI d.5 (BTA, 79); XVI.4. (BTA, 147); XXIV.8 (BTA, 193).
[59] *GBd.* XXIV.8 (BTA, 195).
[60] *Mēnōg ī Khrad* LXII.37.
[61] *GBd.* IV.17 (BTA, 51).
[62] Cf. *GBd.* XVI.4 (BTA, 147).
[63] *Mēnōg ī Khrad* LXII.42.
[64] *GBd.* VI d.6 (BTA, 79).
[65] *GBd.* XVI.5 (BTA,147).
[66] See *GBd.* XXIV a.1 (BTA, 193); XVI.5 (BTA, 147).
[67] *GBd.* VI d.6: *pad abāz-dārišnīh ī zarmān ī dušdaft* (on which see Bailey, *BSOS* VI, 1931, 597-8).
[68] See O. Viennot, *Le culte de l'arbre dans l'Inde ancienne*, Paris 1954, 26-32 and especially p. 30; Kirfel, *Kosmographie*, 93-4.

[69] *GBd.* I a.12 (BTA, 25).
[70] See, e.g., *Yt.* 7.3, 5, 6; *GBd.* VI e. 2-3 (BTA, 81); VII.5-6 (BTA, 87-9).
[71] *GBd.* VI e.1 (BTA, 81).
[72] See further below, pp. 172-3.
[73] *GBd.* I a.12 (BTA, 25).
[74] *GBd.* I a.13. For the Zoroastrian texts relating to Gayōmard see Christensen, *Les types du premier homme* .., I.
[75] See K. Hoffmann, "Mārtāṇḍa and Gayōmart", *MSS* XI, 1957, 100.
[76] *GBd.* I a.13.
[77] Hoffman, art. cit., 85-103.
[78] See H. W. Bailey, intro. to the 2nd ed. of *Zor. Problems*, xxxiv-xxxv, and *Mithraic Studies*, I, ed. Hinnells, 16 with n. 32, who takes *mārtāṇḍa* as a *vṛddhi*-formation from *marta-*

divine, but men are his descendants. Mārtāṇḍa, like Gayō.marətan, is said to have been as wide as he was tall, the "seed" from which all human life was to come; and there can be little doubt that these two figures derive from a common Indo-Iranian myth, representing one of the varied attempts to answer the question of the origin of man.[79] The fact that Mārtāṇḍa was regarded as the last of the Ādityas brings this myth into association with the old Asuric religion.[80]

In the Zoroastrian version of the myth Gayō-marətan was slain in his turn by the Evil Spirit, and his seed, after being purified by the sun, was partly guarded by Nairyō.saŋha (Nēryōsang), partly entrusted to the earth, from which after 40 years there sprang the rhubarb plant that grew slowly into Mašya and Mašyānag, the first mortal man and woman.[81] From them came all the human race that inhabits Khvaniratha, and particularly, according to *Yt.*13.87 "the family of the Aryan peoples, the race of the Aryan peoples". The bodies of Gayōmard and the Bull are both said to have been created out of earth; but their seed was from fire, not water, which otherwise is the ultimate source of all life.[82]

Man is the last of the six visible, distinct creations. There was held, however, to be a seventh creation, namely fire itself, which, though visible and perceptible in its own right, was also considered to pervade the other six, being "distributed in all".[83] Not only is the seed of living creatures (animals and men) derived from fire; fire runs through the veins of the earth, keeping the roots of plants and springs of water warm and alive during winter; and it is seen in the sky in lightning and the sun itself,

"mortal" and *āṇḍa* "egg" (for "seed"), and compares Iranian **marta-taukhman* "mortal seed" (attested in Sogdian *mrtym'k*, Parthian and Middle Persian *mrdwhm*, Persian *mardum* "mankind"). *Mārta-* could, however, he points out, also be derived from *mṛta* "dead"; and this error was made in the Brāhmaṇas, where a tale is told of how Mārtāṇḍa was still-born of the goddess Aditi, her last offspring, and was brought to life by his brother Ādityas "for progeny but also for death" (see Hoffmann, art. cit.). In what is probably a subsequent development Mārtāṇḍa was identified as the father of the two first men, Yama and Manu, see Hoffmann, art. cit., 94.

[79] The roundness of Gayō.marətan has led more than one scholar to see him as a microcosm corresponding to the round macrocosm, and hence as a figure of theological speculation rather than mythical imagining; but as Hoffmann points out (art. cit., 98) the microcosmic-macrocosmic speculations of the later tradition are nowhere in fact brought into connection with Gayō.marətan. He also rejects any association with the motive of the "world-egg" see ibid., 92 n. 22. On a connection of the round Mārtāṇḍa, like Gayō.marətan, with the sun, see Hoffman, ibid., 100.

[80] See Hoffmann, art. cit., 99-100.

[81] *GBd.* XIV. 5-6 (BTA, 127-9). There is a curious preceding passage (XIV.2) where it is said that the minerals came from Gayōmard's body: lead, tin, silver, copper, glass, steel, gold. Elsewhere (*GBd.* I a.10, BTA, 25) several of these are said to have been part of the third creation, having been formed within the earth.

[82] *GBd.* I a.13 (BTA, 27); cf. I a.3 (BTA, 21).

[83] *Zādspram*, I.25 (ed. BTA 7, lxviii); = I.2.1 in the translation of West, *SBE* V, 159. See also Bailey, *Zor. Problems*, 122. Cf. *GBd.* III.8 (BTA, 39).

which is of the nature of fire and shares its heat and brightness. This brightness fire derives from the "Endless Light, the abode of Ohrmazd", which lies above the rim of the sky.[84]

According to the *Bundahišn*, fire was the last of the seven creations;[85] but it is by no means always numbered among them, and does not so appear in the ancient *Farvardīn Yašt*, where the rest are repeatedly invoked. It is probable, therefore, that regarding it as one of the creations was a matter of interpretation. The fully-evolved doctrine may well have been that this element first passed into the being of the six creations proper when these became animated, forming as it were their life-force; for the theory was that in the beginning all was static: the sun stood still at noon above an earth which lay flat and bare upon the motionless waters, with the plant, the bull and Gayō.marətan existing quietly at the centre of an empty world. It seems almost certain that the pagan doctrine was that there then came threefold sacrifice, made presumably (like the first sacrifice in Vedic mythology) by the gods themselves.[86] Even in the surviving Zoroastrian version of the creations, in which the pagan perspective has evidently been largely altered, the dried-up plant is pounded and its essence given to the waters to produce all other plants, just as the dried *haoma* is pounded in the living ritual and its essence offered in libation to water, for the benefit of plants in general. The mythical bull is slain and all animal life springs from its body; and the mythical First Man dies in order to beget mankind. These appear to be cultic myths of prototype sacrifices made to generate all living things. Of them human sacrifice was probably already largely abandoned by the late pagan period.[87] The animal sacrifice is still occasionally made, however, in India and Iran, by Brahman and Zoroastrian, even in the present day,[88] and the offering of *soma/haoma* is regularly maintained.

[84] *GBd.* I a.6 (BTA, 23).

[85] E.g., *GBd.* III.7 (BTA, 39).

[86] Cf. the Indian myth of Prajāpati (the product likewise, it is evident, of priestly speculation), who was the first sacrifice, offered by the gods themselves, and the origin of sacrifice; see in detail S. Lévi, *La doctrine du sacrifice dans les Brâhmaṇas*, Paris 1898, 13-35.

[87] The human sacrifice made by Amestris was propitiatory and apparently singular, unrelated to any regular cult; and the sacrifice of 18 foreigners at the Nine Ways appears somewhat similar, a propitiatory offering in time of war, like the sacrifice of a Greek sailor (see Herodotus VII.114, 180). The only other human sacrifices attested from pagan Iran are those made at Scythian royal funerals, evidently to provide the dead man with a retinue in the hereafter. Widengren's suggestion (*Die Religionen Irans*, 116) that a passage in the *Vendidād* may refer to human sacrifice (and cannibalism) is based on a misunderstanding of the text, see Boyce, *JRAS* 1966, 104 n. 1.

[88] On the bull-sacrifice and its significance see H. Lommel, *Rel.*, 182-3; *Paideuma* III, 1949, 207 ff.; Gershevitch, *AHM*, 64 ff.; U. Bianchi, *Sir J. J. Zarthoshti Madressa Centenary Vol.*, Bombay 1967, 19-25; and further below, Ch. 8. On animal-sacrifice among the Zoroastrians in modern times see Vol. IV.

From these primeval sacrifices there came, it was held, movement and growth and productivity, which continued thenceforth not only through the proper motion of things, but also through the ceaseless care and energy of the divine beings. We have already seen how individual gods help the annual processes of nature, and how much also is attributed to the intervention of the *fravašis*, "who fashion the beautiful paths of the . . . waters, which formerly stood, created, not having flowed forward, in the same place for a long time . . . who fashion the beautiful shoots of the . . . plants, which formerly stood, created, not sprouting, in the same place for a long time . . . who fashion the paths of the stars, moon, sun, the endless lights, which formerly stood in the same place for a long time . . . then they now hasten onwards" (*Yt.*13.53-7). At the beginning of the *Farvardīn Yašt* the six creations are constantly referred to, because of the care which the *fravašis* bestow upon them. Though fire is not directly spoken of, the sun and other luminaries are mentioned; and in the ancient *Yasna Haptaŋhāiti* the worshippers venerate Ahura Mazdā "who created cattle and order *(aša-)*, created waters and good plants, created light and earth and all things good" (*Y.*37.1). Here, however, if *aša* is taken to represent fire (as in Zoroaster's own teachings) then all the creations are named except the sky, for instead of the expected pair "sky and earth" one has "light and earth". Yet probably this is no more than poetic variation, with the crystal sky here represented by the light of the luminaries which move across it and distinguish it so splendidly from the dark soil.[89]

Interwoven in the basically simple, intellectually severe doctrine of the creations there are, as we have seen, a number of what appear to be older myths, somewhat uneasily reconciled. Parallels may readily be traced for these archaic elements in various other lands, but no certain direct links have been established between them and the myths of other peoples. The Indian Puruṣa, the primal giant of Vedic mythology, who was sacrificed by the gods,[90] has been compared with Gayō.marətan,[91] since from this sacrifice the world was created with all that is in it; but the parallels are not close, and it is not possible safely to say more than that the germ of a common concept may lie remotely behind an idea which was developed differently by the Iranian and Indian priests. There may perhaps even be some distant connection between this concept and, for example, the Scandinavian belief in the primal giant Ymir. The idea of the fertilising bull-

[89] Cf. *GBd.* XIV.12 (BTA, 129), where as Mašya and Mašyānag utter thanksgiving they say: "Ohrmazd created water and earth, plants and animals and stars, moon and sun".
[90] On him see, e.g., Gonda, *Rel. Indiens* I, 186-7.
[91] In perhaps the greatest detail by Zaehner, *Zurvan*, 137-40.

sacrifice seems widespread, but it has not proved possible to trace with certainty any parallel myth in the Vedas. As for the Tree of All Seeds, attempts have been made to associate this with the World-Tree of the Scandinavians—Yggdrasill's Ash or the Irminsul of the Old Saxons, *quod Latine dicitur universalis columna, quasi sustinens omnia.*[92] This concept, however, probably itself developed from that of local sacred trees, often associated in their sanctuaries with a spring of water and held to have healing properties in their bark or fruits.[93] The Tree of All Seeds growing in Vourukaša, and the Indian Jambū Tree, both seem mythical developments of such tree-cults. Evidence survives of tree worship in ancient Iran, for instance offerings by the Achaemenian Xerxes of golden ornaments to a beautiful plane tree,[94] and the existence at the Achaemenian court of an artificial plane tree all of gold and jewel-adorned, which was likewise an object of cult.[95] Still today there are Zoroastrian shrines in Persia where huge old trees are venerated, sometimes by the side of sacred springs;[96] and the ancient and persistent cult of trees in India is amply documented.[97]

As the mythical Tree of All Seeds may have had its actual prototype in some great sacred tree in a local sanctuary, so too the concepts of Vourukaša and high Harā were probably based on some particular sea or lofty mountain-range. Indeed the fact that Vourukaša is said to lie to the south of Harā fits with the theory that its original may have been the Black Sea or Caspian, as known to dwellers on the steppelands to the north. It seems useless, however, to speculate in any detail on such points, or to seek to identify any natural rivers as the original Vaŋhvī Dāityā or Raŋha—especially since the wandering Iranians of old appear to have been as unimaginative as any other colonists in the matter of place- and river-names, using traditional ones for the new mountains and streams which they discovered as they moved from place to place. Thus it is often impossible to be certain whether a particular name in the Zoroastrian books represents a mythical or an actual place; and if the latter, to know to what point of time (and hence locality) the usage should be assigned. So wherever an

[92] *Mon. Germ.* II, 676; see Chadwick, *Heroic Age*, 407.
[93] See Chadwick, *Cult of Othin*, 72-80.
[94] Herodotus VIII.31.
[95] Xenophon, *Hellenica*, VII.1.38.
[96] Notably in the village of Čam near Yazd, where the fire-temple is built under the branches of a sacred tree, a splendid old cedar; and the mountain-shrine of Pīr-i Sabz between Yazd and Ardekan, which is overhung by a sacred tree growing beside a spring. For the cypress of Kishmar, said to have been planted by the prophet himself, see Jackson, *Zoroaster*, 163-4, and further in Vol. III.
[97] See Viennot, op. cit.

original Harā may once have stood, the name Alburz now denotes for Persians the great chain of mountains which runs across the north of their country, dividing the central plateau from the Caspian plain—a range worthy of the ancient name, but one obviously remote from the homelands of the Avestan people, let alone from those of their remote ancestors on the Asian steppes. The semi-mythical Raŋha came in due course to be identified with the Jaxartes, and its companion the Dāityā, "chief of rivers",[98] with the Oxus, but when Kərəsāspa is said to have worshipped at a tributary of the Raŋha this cannot be taken as a certain geographical identification, even if it were established when this great warrior lived. The later identifications of these river-names as they occur in the Pahlavi books have been carefully analysed,[99] but are plainly irrelevant to their use in the ancient texts.

Another local name which is evidently traditional, and is also used at times with mythical connections, is Airyanəm Vaēǰah, in Pahlavi Ērānvēǰ. This is held to mean literally the "Aryan expanse",[100] and was perhaps once applied to the stretch of country occupied in their annual wanderings by the nomad Iranians. In the Zoroastrian works Airyanəm Vaēǰah often appears as a mythical land, the place where all the great events of world "history" took place. It was here that Gayōmard and the Uniquely-created Bull stood, one on each side of the Veh Dāitī which flowed through it[101] (a statement that contradicts another tenet of the theoretical cosmography, that the Veh Dāitī is one of the boundary rivers of Khvaniratha, at whose centre Airyanəm Vaēǰah lies). It was there that the first animals were born of the seed of the Bull when he was slain;[102] and there that Yima ruled, and came to the assembly of the gods.[103] But just as the name Harā is used both of a mythical mountain (home of Mithra and Arədvī Sūrā and supporter of the Činvat Bridge) and also of various local ranges, so the name Airyanəm Vaēǰah appears to have been used both of a mythical land at the centre of the world, and also of wherever the "Airyas" or Avestan people found themselves living. (In the latter application it appears synonymous with Airyō.šayana, the "dwelling-place of the Iranians", *Yt.*10.13.)[104] Hence at some time it came to be

[98] *GBd.* XVII.15 (BTA, 155).
[99] See Markwart, *Wehrot und Arang.*
[100] See Benveniste, "L'Ērān-vēž et l'origine légendaire des Iraniens", *BSOS* VII, 1934, 265-74.
[101] *GBd.* I a.12-13 (BTA, 25) with *Vd.* 1.2.
[102] *GBd.* XIII.4 (BTA, 119).
[103] *Vd.* 2.21.
[104] In *Yt.* 10.14 there is a description of Airyō.šayana which accords broadly with the identification of this area with Greater Khwarezmia, see Gershevitch, *AHM*, 174-6. The

applied, it seems, to Khwarezmia. So one has the contradiction that in the *Vendidād* (*Vd.*1.2) Airyanəm Vaēǰah is described as "the first, the best of dwelling-places and lands", and yet is said to have a winter of ten months' duration and a summer of two months (*Vd.*1.3), which is held to be a tolerable description of the Khwarezmian climate.[105] Later still, when the influence of the Magi led to a transfer of the old traditional names to Media, Ērānvēǰ was located "in the region of Azarbaijan",[106] that is, in the north-west of Iran instead of in the north-east.

The basically simple, schematised world-picture of the ancient Iranians was duly elaborated to accommodate the more striking geographical facts which were actually known to them. Thus in addition to the mythical Vourukaša, itself of sweet water, three large salt seas were recognized, in Pahlavi the Pūdig (Av. Pūitika), Syāwbūm and Kamrōd.[107] Of these the biggest was the Pūdig, whose name comes from the base *pu* "cleanse". This sea was tidal, and was held to be directly connected to Frākhvkard (Vourukaša). The ingoing tide was thought to carry pure water back into Vourukaša, while the outgoing one, driven by high winds, bore all impurities away from it.[108] What stretch of actual water was originally identified with the Avestan Pūitika remains unknown, but in Sasanian times the Zoroastrian priests gave this name to the Persian Gulf, and regarded Kamrōd as the Caspian and Syāwbūm as the Black Sea.[109] There were reckoned to be 23 lesser salt "seas" or lakes[110] (the same word is used for both), of which the most famous was Lake Kąsaoya (Pahlavi Kayānsih) which figures largely in Zoroastrian tradition. Various other small lakes or seas were listed which were of fresh water.[111]

As for rivers, at one time, it seems, there were held to be eighteen of these, apart from the Veh Rōd and Arang;[112] but the *Bundahišn* names many more, including the Tigris (Diglit) and Euphrates (Frāt),[113] so that it is plain that scholar-priests made constant additions to an original skeleton geography. At the end of the section devoted to rivers it is said: "There are other numberless waters and rivers, springs and channels. From their sources men have drunk. The origin of these waters is one,

actual geographical data given in this verse are followed immediately, in v. 15, by an enumeration of the seven mythical *karšvars*.
[105] See Benveniste, art. cit., 271.
[106] *GBd.* XXIX.12 (BTA, 257).
[107] *GBd.* X.7 (BTA, 101).
[108] See *Vd.* 5.18-19, *GBd.* X.8-9 (BTA, 103).
[109] *GBd.* X.14-15 (BTA, 103).
[110] *GBd.* X.7 (BTA, 101).
[111] *GBd.* X.17 (BTA, 103).
[112] *GBd.* XI.2 (BTA, 105).
[113] *GBd.* XI.8 (BTA, 107).

(although) in various lands and places they are called by various names".[114] All, that is, are held to derive ultimately from the river *Haravaitī as it flows down upon the sea Vourukaša and out from there. Similarly the names of mountains, already fairly numerous in the Avesta, are multiplied in the Pahlavi tradition; and in addition to the many listed in the *Bundahišn* it is said: "The local mountains which are in every place, in each locality and land . . . are many in name and number".[115] There were reckoned in fact to be 2244 such diverse peaks, all held to have grown up from the "roots" of Harburz;[116] and there are also the "little hills, those which have grown up bit by bit in various places".[117] Behind so much diversity and plurality there lay for the old Iranian thinkers a fundamental unity, a common origin. The same is true of plants and animals, held all to come from the one plant and the Uniquely-created Bull. Lists are given in the *Bundahišn* of plants and creatures arranged in various categories—for instance animals are grouped in five "classes" as in the Avesta: domestic animals, wild ones, and those that fly and swim and burrow beneath the earth.[118] These classes are then sub-divided into genera and species, and the members of each species enumerated.[119] Numbering is in general much used, and the lists given evidently provided mnemonic catalogues, this being how scholastic learning was formulated in the priestly schools, to be transmitted orally over innumerable generations. Much of what survives in the Pahlavi books has clearly been added to and elaborated since pagan times; but there can be no doubt that the fundamental doctrine of the six creations was already established before Zoroaster's day, the achievement, doubtless, of many thinkers. As has been observed: "For the creation of a world-system, however fantastic and erroneous this may be, prolonged preoccupation is required with questions especially concerned with this subject."[120] Iranian cosmological theories must have been slowly evolved by the scholastically inclined, whose dominating interest would have been with the origins and physical nature of this world, rather than with moral and spiritual problems, but who nevertheless, in keeping with their culture and times, saw creation in all its aspects as being the handiwork of the gods.

[114] *GBd.* XI a.30-1 (BTA, 111).
[115] *GBd.* IX.31 (BTA, 97).
[116] *GBd.* IX.3 (BTA, 93).
[117] *GBd.* IX.45 (BTA, 99).
[118] *GBd.* XIII.9 (BTA, 119).
[119] *GBd.* XIII.10 ff.
[120] Kirfel, *Kosmographie*, 28*.

CHAPTER SIX

THE PAGAN CULT

The Iranians of old, believing themselves to be living in a world created and sustained by many divine powers, evidently devoted much time and thought, wealth and energy to pleasing the gods on whom their lives depended. The purposes of their worship were plainly complex; but broadly speaking they offered gifts and praises with two main intentions: to win divine favour for themselves as individuals, so that they might prosper in this life and the next, and to strengthen the gods for the common good, so that they might be better able to maintain the physical world which is man's present home. The pagan philosophy in this latter respect is vividly expressed (although in partly Zoroastrian terms) in *Yašt 6*, the hymn to the sun-god: "When the sun ascends, the Ahura-created earth is purified . . . the running water is purified . . . all creation possessing *aša* is purified . . . And if the sun were not to rise, then the *daēvas* would destroy all that is in the seven *karšvars*. Not one of the heavenly gods would find a place to abide or stay in this corporeal world. He who sacrifices to the life-giving sun, magnificent, swift-horsed, in order to resist darkness, in order to resist the *daēvas* born of darkness . . . he rejoices all the divine beings of the heavenly world and this world" (*Yt.* 6.2-4). Similarly, as we have already seen, rains were held to fall and plants to grow through the power of particular gods, who likewise needed to be strengthened by worship in order to perform their tasks.[1] So Tištrya cries aloud, driven back by the demon Apaoša: "Woe to me! misery, O waters and plants! . . . men do not worship me now . . . If men would worship me . . . I should take to myself the strength of ten horses, ten camels, ten bulls, ten mountains, ten channelled streams" (*Yt.*8.23-4). When having been duly worshipped he attains this strength, he calls out a second time: "Well is me! well, O waters and plants! . . . well shall it be, O lands! The courses of waters shall surge out unhindered for the large-seeded corn, for the small-seeded grasses and for the corporeal world" (*Yt.*8.29). The worship thus offered not only gives the god new power but causes him to look kindly on the worshipper. So Mithra is represented as saying: "Who is he that worships me . . .? On whom may I bestow riches and fortune,

[1] Cf., e.g., *Y.* 10.6 (Haoma growing according to the measure in which he is praised).

on whom health of body, on whom possessions affording much comfort? For whom shall I raise noble progeny hereafter?" (*Yt.*10.108).

The following statement about sacrifice in general applies fully to observances in ancient Iran:[2] "In any sacrifice there is an act of abnegation since the sacrifier[3] deprives himself and gives. Often this abnegation is even imposed upon him as a duty. For sacrifice is not always optional; the gods demand it. . . . But this abnegation and submission are not without their selfish aspect. The sacrifier gives . . . partly in order to receive. Thus sacrifice shows itself in a dual light; it is a useful act and it is an obligation. Disinterestedness is mingled with self-interest. That is why it has so frequently been conceived of as a form of contract". To this day Zoroastrians put all major acts of worship, which are invariably accompanied by offerings, under the protection of Mithra, lord of the contract.[4]

To judge from the similarity of ritual offerings still made by Zoroastrians and Brahmans, these belong to a tradition deriving from the Indo-Iranian past.[5] Those of the Zoroastrians include, in the various major rituals, milk, pure water, and the sap of plants, i.e. *haoma* and the pomegranate; corn (in wheaten cakes); fruit and vegetables; butter and eggs; domestic animals and fowls.[6] In lesser ceremonies wine also is consecrated. The general term for such offerings appears to have been *myazda*, Skt. *miyédha*, *médha*, which was often used of the blood sacrifice, but probably meant originally the pith or essence of any offering, that part of

[2] H. Hubert et M. Mauss, *Essai sur la nature et la fonction du sacrifice*, *L'Année sociologique*, 1898; cited here in the English translation by W. D. Halls, *Sacrifice: its nature and function*, London 1964, 100.

[3] The word "sacrifier" was coined by the English translator to render "sacrifiant", defined by Hubert and Mauss as "the subject to whom the benefits of the sacrifice accrue", as distinct from the priest who actually despatches the victim. The "sacrifier", that is, is the Vedic *yajamāna*, the Zoroastrian giver of the *framāyišn* (see above, p. 10).

[4] See Boyce, *BSOAS* XXXII, 1969, 26-7; and cf. Thieme, *Mitra and Aryaman*, 84.

[5] On common elements in the Iranian and Indian rituals see Haug, *Essays*, 3rd ed., 279 ff., and his introduction to his ed. of *The Aitareya Brahmana*, Bombay 1863, I, 60-2; V. Henry in W. Caland and V. Henry, *L'Agniṣṭoma*, Paris 1906-7, II, Appendice III, 469-70; K. E. Pavri, *Dastur Hoshang Memorial Volume*, Bombay 1918, 165-92; Thieme, *ZDMG* CVII (N.F. XXXII), 1957, 71-7; Boyce, *BSOAS* XXXIII, 1970, 24-5. The Iranian rituals are treated chiefly in the difficult Pahlavi *Nirangestān*, ed. D. P. Sanjana, Bombay 1894, of which there is a pioneer and useful (but also difficult) English translation by S. J. Bulsara, *Aērpatastān and Nirangastān*, Bombay 1915. For the rituals of living Zoroastrianism see Modi, *Ceremonies and customs*; Duchesne-Guillemin, *La religion de l'Iran ancien*, 71-125. For treatises on the Indian material, derived from the many Indian ritual texts, see, e.g., J. Schwab, *Das altindische Thieropfer*, Erlangen 1886; Oldenberg, *Religion*, 307-474; Hillebrandt, *Ritualliteratur. Vedische Opfer und Zauber*, in *Grundriss der Indo-arischen Philologie und Altertumskunde*, III 2, Strassburg 1897; S. Lévi, *La doctrine du sacrifice dans les Brāhmaṇas*, Paris 1898; P. E. Dumont, *L'Agnihotra*, Baltimore 1939; Gonda, *Rel. Indiens* I, 104-73.

[6] Animal sacrifices have been abandoned at the major rituals by both communities, Parsi and Irani, probably since the end of the last century; but they are still offered on some other occasions by a minority of Irani Zoroastrians.

it which was especially assigned to the gods. Thus in Avestan usage *myazda* plainly comprised both solid and liquid offerings, and could be qualified as being "of flesh and wine" (*gaomant*, *madhumant*, *Vd.*8.22). Another term, which must originally have meant only "libation", is *zaothra*, Skt. *hotrá*, which comes from the root *zav/hav* "pour"; but already in the Avesta this word was sometimes used as a synonym for *myazda*, and in some Middle Iranian languages it meant especially the blood sacrifice.[7] The semantic development was presumably that from remote antiquity it was used not only for liquids but also for substances which liquify in heat, such as animal fat, and hence by degrees came to be applied also to oblations generally.

Of offerings it has been said:[8] "Usage seems to limit the word sacrifice to designate only sacrifices where blood is shed. To restrict the meaning . . . in this way is arbitrary. Due allowance having been made, the mechanism of consecration is the same in all cases, there is consequently no objective reason for distinguishing between them . . . By the Hindus . . . the objects offered up . . . are all considered as equally living, and are treated as such . . . When a libation of milk is made . . . it is not something inanimate that is offered up, but the cow itself, in its liquid essence, its sap, its fertility." The same approach is found in Iran. Yet despite this "generic unity of sacrifices"[9] the blood sacrifice must always have been the rarest and most highly regarded; and the great merit of an act of worship with animal offering is stressed in a number of Pahlavi texts.[10] This was partly of course because of its costliness to the sacrifier; but plainly it was not only the expense, and therefore the degree of self-abnegation involved, which set this particular offering apart and invested it with peculiar solemnity. The shedding of blood involved in itself a kind of crime against the victim, and it was necessary therefore to observe the prescribed rituals most strictly, so that the act of destruction should be limited to the creature's physical life and its spirit be released to depart to the other world, there to "nourish the eternal life of the species".[11] In the Rigveda the sacrificial animal is assured: "Truly you do not die, you do not suffer harm. By paths easy to traverse you go to the gods".[12]

[7] See, with references, Boyce, *JRAS* 1966, 105.

[8] Hubert-Mauss, op. cit., pp. 12-3.

[9] Ibid., 13.

[10] See Boyce, *JRAS*, 1966, 102-3.

[11] Hubert-Mauss, op. cit., 97. On the soul of the animal wrongfully slaughtered not reaching Gāuš Urvan see *Yt.* 14.54-6 (on which verses see further below, p. 171).

[12] *RV* 1.162.21; cited by Oldenberg, *Rel.*, 357. It is perhaps because the animal's released spirit was to find its way to heaven that in the Zoroastrian and Brahman rites the creature

In the Pahlavi books it is stressed that to take life except in this way, as a sacrifice devoted to the divine beings, is to be guilty of the sin of "destroying existence" *(būdyōzadīh)*;[13] and certain religious rites were prescribed therefore at the killing even of wild animals. In Iran the belief appears to have been that the creature's consecrated spirit was absorbed into Gāuš Urvan, the "Soul of the Bull";[14] and it seems probable that the origin of this divine concept was indeed in the sacrifice itself, the repeated "release" of the spirits of individual animals creating the personification which is the sum of them all. (It was evidently later that theologians identified Gāuš Urvan with the soul of the Uniquely-created Bull, from whom all animal life had come,[15] and so established a cycle and a unity, with animals tracing their physical life from the Bull's seed, and their souls returning at death to be re-absorbed in his soul.) That the thoughts of worshippers were directed at a sacrifice to the soul of the victim, in Iran as in India, is shown by the following passage in the *Yasna Haptaŋhāiti*, that part of the Zoroastrian liturgy which once accompanied the central act of the blood sacrifice. There those taking part reverence "Gāuš Urvan and (Gāuš) Tašan, then our souls and (those) of the domestic animals which nourish us . . . and the souls of useful wild animals" (*Y*.39.1-2).

In the remote pastoral period of the Indo-Iranian peoples, when they were dependent on their herds of cattle, the sacrificial beast must regularly have been the cow or bull; and this continued to be the most highly regarded offering, both because of costliness and because of the religious symbolism in connection with the first, creative sacrifice of the Bull.[16] Even in the days of their impoverishment the Zoroastrians of Yazd made this great offering yearly at what seems to have been an ancient shrine to the waters, a practice maintained until the late nineteenth

had to be alert and conscious at the moment of death. See *Nīrangestān*, ed. Sanjana, fol. 128 V ff., transl. Bulsara, 323-7. But the Magi of Armenia, according to Strabo (XV.3.15), followed the practice of first stunning the beast with a log; and his observation is endorsed in a later Zoroastrian text, *Dīnkard*, ed. Madan, 466.12, on which see Zaehner, *Zurvan*, 52; Benveniste, *JA* 1964, 54-6.

[13] See Boyce, *Henning Mem. Vol.*, 71.

[14] See *GBd.* III.14 (BTA, 41). For a still older belief see above, p. 117.

[15] *GBd.* IVa.2 (BTA, 53): *Gōš Urvan, čeōn ruwān i gāw i ēw-dād, az tan i gāw bērōn mad, ud pēš gāw be ēstād* "Gōš Urvan, as the soul of the Uniquely-created Bull, left the body of the Bull and stood before the Bull."

[16] See Lommel, "Die Sonne das Schlechteste?" *Oriens* XV, 1962, reprinted in *Zarathustra*, ed. Schlerath, 363. For a brief exposition of the importance of the cow in Vedic sacrifice (as originating in the remote pastoral period) see Oldenberg, *Rel.*, 330. Great cattle-sacrifices are recorded in historical times, among them the offering of 1000 cattle by Xerxes at the river Scamander (Herodotus, VII.43). Because of its costliness the cow-sacrifice became gradually rarer, it seems, in the settled period, with goats or sheep being commonly offered instead.

century.[17] When the horse was domesticated among the Indians and Iranians (probably after 2000 B.C.) the horse sacrifice also became one of great worth and charged with significance. In the *yašts* horses are regularly mentioned among the beasts offered up by kings and heroes;[18] and in historical times horses were especially devoted to the sun,[19] "under the notion" (Herodotus records) "of giving to the swiftest of the gods, the swiftest of all mortal creatures".[20] They were also, it seems, sacrificed for the souls of the illustrious dead, to ensure them a place in sun-illumined Paradise.[21] Occasionally in the Avesta itself a stipulation is made about the nature of the animal appropriate as offering to a particular god. Thus both Tištrya and Vərəthraghna should receive only an animal that is all of one colour,[22] whereas Mithra might be worshipped, it seems, with offerings of all colours and many kinds—not only the cow and bull, sheep and goats, but also winged fowl.[23] To judge from current practice, once a particular beast had been devoted to a divine being (which might happen months before the sacrifice took place) no other could be substituted, for any reason whatsoever: that animal belonged to the god.[24]

It is the common practice among Indians and Iranians, as we have seen, to devote each sacrifice to a particular deity, who is called down by name, with the proper ritual words, in order to hear the praises offered him and to receive the gifts of his worshippers. Thus in the hymn to Arədvī Sūrā the goddess is invoked: "Because of this sacrifice, because of this prayer . . . come down, Arədvī Sūrā Anāhitā, from those stars above to the Ahura-created earth, to the sacrificing priest, to the overflowing, hollowed hand, that you may aid him who, devout, brings you offerings . . .".[25] Many boons, it is said, were sought of this goddess. "Brave warriors will ask of you swift horses and the supremacies of fortune *(khvarənah-)*. Priests who recite . . . will ask of you wisdom and holiness . . . Maidens will ask of you a strong master in the house. Women giving birth will ask of you an easy delivery. And all these things you, having power, will grant them,

[17] See Boyce, *BSOAS* XXX, 1967, 42-3.

[18] E.g. *Yt.* 5.21 (a standard and recurrent formula).

[19] See Xenophon, *Anabasis*, IV.5.35; VIII. 3.12.24; Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius*, I.31.

[20] Herodotus, I.216 (with specific reference to the horse-sacrifices of the Massagetae).

[21] Cf. the horse-sacrifice at the tomb of Cyrus, see above, p. 122.

[22] *Yt.* 8.58; 14.50.

[23] *Yt.* 10.119 (*pace* Gershevitch, *AHM*, 270-1, who considered this verse in isolation from the general background of Zoroastrian religious observance; see Boyce, *JRAS* 1966, 109 n. 4).

[24] Thus, for example, twin lambs may be born and one dedicated from that moment to Mithra (Mihr). If one should thrive less well than its brother, still when the time of Mihragān comes it is not permissible to substitute the fatter beast, even to do greater honour to the god. For an incident concerning a dedicated animal see Xenophon, *Anabasis* IV.5.35.

[25] *Yt.* 5.132.

O Arədvī Sūrā Anāhitā."[26] Particular boons sought in the *yašts* were that a worshipper might escape a peril,[27] or triumph in a riddle-contest,[28] or defeat a named foe in combat.[29] Most petitions were in this fashion for material things; and similar prayers might be addressed to diverse divinities, in accordance with the Indo-Iranian tendency to attribute "to any great god all the powers which are important to men."[30] The gifts bestowed by Mithra are explicitly said, however, to be in part spiritual ones, as might be expected from the great ethical Ahura; for as well as giving fatness and flocks, power and progeny, he also bestows the quality of being *ašavan*, an upholder of order, and the gifts of fair fame and peace of soul, and protection from the armies of falsehood.[31]

Although sacrifices were regularly accompanied by prayers for immediate benefits to the sacrifier, it was evidently felt that, since they were also intended for the pleasure of the gods, they were in themselves meritorious and constituted a steadily increasing treasure laid up by a man in heaven during his lifetime, which would help him attain blessedness hereafter. So Mithra is thus addressed by his worshippers: "May you hear our sacrifice, O Mithra, may you be pleased with our sacrifice, O Mithra, may you be seated at our sacrifice, may you attend upon our offerings, may you attend upon them when they have been sacrificed, may you take them all to your care, may you deposit them in the House of Song."[32] The expression "House of Song" brings to mind the Rigvedic description of Paradise, with Yama playing his flute beneath a fig-tree; and the concept of laying up treasure there, it has been pointed out,[33] underlies Zoroaster's own words in *Y*.49.10, where he speaks of putting in safety in Mazdā's "house" the veneration of the just, with their devotions and sacrificial offerings *(īžā-)*, to be watched over by Mazdā himself. Offerings had also, as we have seen, the purpose of strengthening the gods to fulfil their part in maintaining the orderly functioning of the physical world and human society. Every sacrifice had therefore a fourfold intention: the satisfaction of the divinity, material and spiritual gain for the sacrifier, and benefit for all the "world of *aša*". With this complexity of purpose, it hardly seems

[26] *Yt.* 5.86-7.
[27] *Yt.* 5.63.
[28] *Yt.* 5.82.
[29] E.g. *Yt.*5.58, 73; *Yt.* 15.28.
[30] See Keith, *Rel. and phil.* II, 331.
[31] See *Yt.* 10.65, 33, 5.
[32] *Yt.* 10.32 (the translation, given in class, of Professor W. B. Henning, who took *čimane* as a corrupt dative sg. of *činman-* "thought, thought for, care, solicitude" (cf. *Yt.* 19.33). For other renderings of the verse see Gershevitch, *AHM*, 183-4).
[33] Humbach, *IF* LXIII, 43-4; *Die Gathas*, I, 145.

adequate to interpret the Indo-Iranian act of sacrifice simply as a food-offering to the gods, modelled, with its ritual of invocation, prayer and praise, on a banquet offered to an earthly king to secure his favour, with invitation, courteous words and panegyrics.[34] Such mundane acts of hospitality provided, no doubt, a pattern for men's behaviour toward the gods, their divine guests, and the desire to proffer to these unseen visitants offerings which would please them was undoubtedly strong; but it nevertheless appears as only one element in the purpose of the Indo-Iranian sacrifice. Other elements have sometimes been classified as magical, in that the intention behind them was to work directly upon the physical world without the intervention necessarily of a deity. In India these magical elements grew to predominate, so that in time the sacrifice came to be regarded there as a means of controlling the gods themselves, rather than as an act whereby to seek their favour;[35] but in Iran such a tendency, if it existed, was effectively checked by Zoroaster's reform.

In addition to sacrificing to the gods on high, the Indo-Iranians made regular offerings to fire and water, two elements which played a vital part in their daily lives, and which seemed to possess a spirit and animation which led to their being readily personified. The *zaothra* to fire consisted of a small part of the sacrificial victim, which was placed upon the flames. In Zoroastrian Iran, it seems, no blood sacrifice was ever made without the fire receiving this allotted portion, and the practice undoubtedly goes back far into pagan times. In old Indian ritual the prescribed part of the animal was the omentum (one of the fattiest parts of the entrails). As soon as the victim was slain, an incision was made and the omentum removed and given to the fire.[36] Strabo records from hearsay the same custom among the Persians, who were reported (he says), when sacrificing, to lay "a small piece of omentum" on the flames.[37] He himself at the beginning of the Christian era saw how Persians offered sacrifice to fire "by adding dry wood without the bark and placing soft fat upon it";[38] and in the 17th century A.C. an Italian visitor to a Zoroastrian fire temple in Isfahan saw fat from the tail of a fat-tailed sheep being offered thus to the

[34] See Oldenberg, *Rel.*, 308-9; Thieme, *ZDMG* CVII, 1957, 67-90. On the *barhis / barəsman* as a seat for the divine guests see Thieme, ibid., 73; Oldenberg, *Rel.*, 344-5; and further below.
[35] On this see in detail S. Lévi, *La doctrine du sacrifice dans les Brāhmaṇas*, passim.
[36] See J. Schwab, *Thieropfer*, 112 f.; Oldenberg, *Rel.*, 358-60.
[37] XV.3.13.
[38] XV.3.14. Darmesteter, *ZA* II, 254, compared Catullus' description (Ode XC in the Oxford ed.) of the Magian sacrifice: "So that the son [as Magus] may venerate the gods when the chant has been accepted, melting the fat caul upon the flame."

sacred fire.[39] This observance was continued among the Irani Zoroastrians down to the early decades of the 20th century. Fat was plainly chosen for the offering because it sustained the fire, encouraging its flames to burn more brightly. Later in India melted butter was often used instead; but the only *zaothra* to fire attested in Iran continued to be that of fat from the sacrificial victim; and for this there is abundant literary evidence, from the *Gāthās*[40] down to the Persian *Rivāyats* and Parsi ordinances of modern times, in addition to the testimony of foreign observers.[41]

The rite evidently evolved originally in connection with the hearth fire, whose cult appears to be of high antiquity, belonging indeed to the sedentary Indo-European period. When the Indo-Iranians became nomadic, each family must have carried its house fire in a pot on the seasonal migrations, re-establishing it on a new hearth wherever the tribe pitched its tents. Texts and practice show that the hearth fire remained an object of cult for Zoroastrians even after they established temple fires; and it continued to be of primary importance in the Brahmanic religion also. In the Zoroastrian prayer to fire, the *Ātaš Niyāyeš*,[42] fire is invoked as "worthy of sacrifice, worthy of prayer, in the dwellings of men *(nmānāhu mašyākanąm)*".[43] To it fuel should be given, "dry, exposed to light",[44] incense *(baoidhi-)*, and due "nourishment" *(pithwa-)*.[45] "The Fire of Ahura Mazdā gives command unto all for whom he cooks the evening and morning meal, from all he solicits a good offering and a wished-for offering and a devotional offering".[46] The Fire needs the service of "one of full age", "instructed";[47] and traditionally each man established his own hearth fire when he set up his household, and this was allowed to go out only when he himself died. The deeply ingrained instinct to give gifts to the divine beings, to sacrifice, was readily evoked by the personified fire, because fire visibly needs offerings and visibly consumes them. Another verse of the *Ātaš Niyāyeš* runs: "Fire looks at the hands of all who pass by:

[39] J. F. Gemelli-Careri, *A voyage round the world* (1694), Ch. 7; Eng. version in Awnsham Churchill's *A collection of voyages and travels*, London 1704, IV, 143a.

[40] *Y.* 29.7. On the meaning of *āzūiti-* in this passage as "oblation of fat" see Gershevitch, *JRAS* 1952, 178; Humbach, *IF* LXIII, 1957, 50-1; *Die Gathas* I, 82 and II, 17; Zaehner, *Dawn*, 34 with 325 n. 8; Boyce, *BSOAS* XXXIII, 1970, 32.

[41] For references see Boyce, *JRAS* 1966, 100-10; *Henning Mem. Vol.*, 77-8.

[42] Edited with Eng. transl. by M. N. Dhalla, *The Nyaishes or Zoroastrian litanies*, 134-87.

[43] *ĀN*, 7.

[44] *ĀN*, 16.

[45] *ĀN*, 8. The word *pithwa-* is a derivative of *pitu-* "meat".

[46] *ĀN*, 13.

[47] *ĀN*, 8.

"What does the friend bring to the friend, the one who goes forth to the one who sits still?'"[48] In later times Zoroastrians have said their family prayers regularly in the presence of this "friend", the house fire; and during the centuries in India when the Parsis had only one temple fire, most households there perforce made all their ritual offerings to the fires upon their own hearths.[49]

The *zaothra* to fire can thus be considered as originally a due portion given to the hearth god of the meal which his own flames were to cook for his worshippers. It was indeed a form of sharing, a mutual compact in which each played his immediate part. The same offering, it is evident, was also made to ritual fire at the place where priests performed the high ceremonies.[50] Such fire was, it seems, sometimes kindled especially for the purpose (with bowstring and wood, or flints), sometimes created from embers taken from a hearth fire; and being of the same nature it, like the house fire, received the *zaothra* of fat. This offering acquired an especial importance in Iran because fire there developed great significance in the general scheme of things as interpreted in the *zaotar* schools: according to their cosmology, as we have seen,[51] each individual fire represented also the cosmic fire which pervades all the other six "creations", and which is in particular the life force in all animate things, plants, animals and men. Therefore in offering *zaothras* to either hearth or ritual fire men not only strengthened those particular flames, but through them gave renewed life to the cosmic fire, which itself sustains all being.

The nomad Indo-Iranians depended on fire for warmth and light and cooked food; but water was the very source of life, and the wells and streams at which they and their herds drank were evidently as much venerated by them as the fires upon their hearths. To this day reverence for water is deeply ingrained in Zoroastrians, and in orthodox communities offerings are regularly made to the household well or nearest stream. Indeed it has been truly said that it would be quite as just and reasonable to call Zoroastrians water- as fire-worshippers.[52] One libation which is still frequently offered in the most traditionalist Yazdi villages appears

[48] *ĀN*, 14.

[49] See Boyce, *BSOAS* XXXI, 1968, 66 n. 100; Kotwal, *BSOAS* XXXVII, 1974, 664-9.

[50] The sacrificial fire *(āhavanīya)* of ancient India was maintained by a rich man at his own house, together with his hearth fire, *(gārhapatya)*, and a third fire, the *dakṣināgni*. Only the *gārhapatya* was, however, kept continually alight, and embers from it were taken to recreate the other two fires for rituals; see Oldenberg, *Rel.*, 348-52; Hillebrandt, *Ritualliteratur*, 68 f. (on the house fire and its cult). For the highest ceremonies fire was kindled anew, see Oldenberg, ibid., 351; Gonda, *Rel. Indiens* I, 139, with references. The house-fire was allowed to die with its owner, as in Iran.

[51] See above, pp. 140-41.

[52] C. P. Tiele, *Geschichte der Religion im Altertum*, German transl. by G. Gehrich, II, 179.

ancient both in character and name; for it is called *āb-zōr*, that is, the "*zaothra* to water".[53] It consists of milk to which are added two things from the vegetable kingdom (such as flower-petals, or herbs, or small fruits). This libation is poured slowly into the water with recital of Avesta, usually by a priest, but sometimes also by women or girls. It seems probable that it owes its ingredients to cosmic speculations of far-off pagan times: the "creation" of water nourishes plants (represented by the vegetable offerings) and both directly and through them cattle (represented by the milk); and so elements of these other two "creations" are returned to it, consecrated by holy words, in order to strengthen it to continue its life-giving activity. The intention is thus the same as with the *zaothra* to fire, to sustain the object venerated; and again, each single well or stream was regarded as being linked with the cosmic water, since it had its ultimate source in the sea Vourukaša. All the water in the world was held to return there periodically; and in the *Bundahišn* (which contains so much ancient material) it is said that water which receives more libation than impure matter *(āb kē hikhr kam ud zōhr wīš)* goes back to its source in three years, whereas otherwise it takes nine.[54] By making these libations, therefore, the worshippers were helping to maintain the creation of water, and thereby the whole world, in purity and good order.

It is impossible to establish precedence between domestic observances and priestly rites, to know, that is, if the former were simplifications of the latter, or the latter evolved from the former; but the fact is that the three things which we have by now considered, namely food-offerings to a particular god, the offering to fire and the offering to water, all of which can be separate acts performed by the laity, are also the elements which together make up the main Indo-Iranian priestly rite known in later times as the *yajña* or *yasna*, that is, "*the* act of worship". The pagan ritual evidently evolved considerably, however, after the separation of the two peoples, so that although the components remain the same, the services have developed very different characters in India and Iran; and how far, on the Iranian side, this is due to advances made already in pagan theology, how far to Zoroaster's reform, must inevitably remain a matter for reasoned speculation. What distinguishes the *yajña/yasna* from other acts of worship is that it centres on the preparation and offering of *soma/haoma*. This offering has been termed the focal point of Vedic religion, and it was evidently of great importance also in pagan Iran; for together with the animal and human sacrifices it reproduced, it seems, one of the three

[53] On this see in detail Boyce, *JRAS* 1966, 111-18.

[54] *GBd.* XI.2 (BTA, 113-15). On this passage see Boyce, art. cit., 117 with n. 5.

great prototype sacrifices which in the beginning brought life into the world[55]—in its case the life of plants, which sustain the existence of animals and men. A comparison of texts and observances makes it appear probable, however, that the cult was elaborated and given enhanced significance by the Indians, whereas, being essentially amoral, it was circumscribed and subordinated in ethical Zoroastrianism, although elements of its old power survive strongly even in the reformed faith.

The Indo-Iranian **sauma* was a plant which, when crushed, yielded a substance that, mixed with water or milk, was a powerful stimulant. It took its name simply from the verb *sav-* "press, crush"; but what the original plant was which was so called is much debated.[56] The Brahmans said explicitly that they no longer possessed the *soma* of old, that it did not grow in their land. What was prepared in the *yajña* was therefore merely a substitute. The matter is not discussed in the Zoroastrian texts; but for hundreds of years the Iranians have known and used a species of ephedra as *haoma*.[57] This plant grows throughout Central Asia as well as on the mountains of Iran. It has tough, fibrous stems which need to be crushed to release the pith,[58] and this pith has hallucinatory properties.[59] The plant corresponds, moreover, well enough with the (admittedly brief and vague) descriptions of *haoma* given in the Avesta; and if one considers the immense conservatism of the Iranians, it seems very possible that some species of ephedra was in fact the original **sauma* of the Indo-Iranians. This plant does not, however, satisfy the much more elaborate and poetic descriptions of *soma* to be found in the Vedas, and it seems un-

[55] See above, p. 141.

[56] The identity of *soma* has recently been made again a matter of lively discussion, initiated by G. Wasson in his massive work *Soma, divine mushroom of immortality, Ethnomycological Studies* I, New York/The Hague 1969, with a contribution by W. D. O'Flaherty, 95-147 (reprinted, without the illustrations, New York 1971). He proposed an identification of *soma* which was not among those previously considered, namely with the fungus *amanita muscaria*. His book was the subject of a review article by J. Brough, *BSOAS* XXXIV, 1971, 331-62, which brought a rejoinder from Wasson, *Soma and the fly-agaric, Botanical Museum of Harvard University*, 1972, at the end of which are listed the principle reviews (by Sanskritists, botanists, ethnologists, and others) of his original book. To these add since I. Gershevitch, "An Iranianist's view of the Soma controversy", *Mémorial Jean de Menasce*, ed. P. Gignoux, Paris 1975, 45-75.

[57] O'Flaherty apud Wasson, *Soma, the divine mushroom*, 120 ff.; Boyce, *Henning Mem. Vol.*, 62, both with references.

[58] Pulverisiug in a mortar appears to have been the Indo-Iranian practice, maintained by Zoroastrians, for which the Brahmans substituted pounding on a stone covered with a bull's hide, see V. Henry in Caland-Henry, *L'Agniṣṭoma* II, 474 f.; Hillebrandt, *Ritualliteratur*, 15. That **sauma* needed to be crushed appears to be against its identification with a soft-fleshed mushroom, see Brough, art. cit., 338-9 (with Wasson's response in *Soma and the fly-agaric*, 41-2; there however he ignores the Iranian evidence in suggesting that the rite of pounding may have been a late development).

[59] For various observations on ephedra and its effects see O'Flaherty apud Wasson, *Soma, divine mushroom*, 126, 138, 140-3; Brough, art. cit., 360-1.

likely that the identity of the ancient plant will ever be decided with agreement between students of the two religions.

From the Avesta one learns that the *haoma* plant was "of many kinds" *(pouru.sarədha)*,[60] which means presumably that, as with the ephedra, there were many different members of its botanic family. It was green *(zairi.gaona)*[61], with pliant shoots,[62] fragrant,[63] fleshy or milky *(gaoman)*[64], and grew on mountain tops and in river valleys,[65] being nurtured first on high Harā by clouds and rain brought by the south wind from the sea Vourukaša.[66] When crushed it yielded a drink which exhilarated and gave heightened powers; and this was the only intoxicant *(madha)* which produced no harmful effects. "All other *madha* are accompanied by Wrath with the bloody club; but the *madha* of Haoma makes one nimble".[67] "The *madha* of Haoma is accompanied by its own rightfulness *(aša-)*".[68] The Vedic priests similarly praised *soma*, contrasting its workings with those produced by a fermented drink *(surā)*. "*Soma* is truth, prosperity, light, and *surā* untruth, misery, darkness."[69] *Soma*, it seems, quickened and enhanced those qualities of which each individual man had need: warriors drinking it readily worked themselves up to battle-fury and became formidable foes, whereas the poet experienced through it a sense of inspiration, of possession by divine power, and the priest acquired mantic wisdom.[70] The evidence for the *haoma* cult in Iran is scattered but considerable. The most interesting text concerning it is the so-called *Hōm Yašt*, which though it exists only in Younger Avestan is clearly in essence very ancient. It survives as part of the *yasna* liturgy (*Y*.9-11) in which it precedes and accompanies the first ritual drinking of the *parahaoma* (that is, the preparation made from *haoma*). In the verses spoken before this takes place the worshippers invoke the god Haoma, the "green one", calling down his intoxication, and seeking from him strength, victory and health.[71] He, they say, can grant power to the whole body, ecstasy of all kinds, and the ability to overcome every foe, whether two-legged or four-

[60] *Y*. 10.12.
[61] Ibid.; on this word see Brough, art. cit., 349-50.
[62] *Y*. 9.16, cf. *Y*.10.5, where there is mention of its "roots, shoots and sprigs."
[63] *Y*. 10.4.
[64] *Gaoman-*, *Y*. 10.12, is a hapax, and its precise significance doubtful.
[65] *Y*. 10.17.
[66] *Y*. 10.10; *Yt*. 8.33.
[67] *Y*. 10.8.
[68] *Yt*. 17.5.
[69] *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, 5.1.2.10, cited by W. O'Flaherty apud Wasson, op. cit., 95. On *soma/surā*, *haoma/hurā* see Brough, art. cit., 331, 348-9.
[70] See Brough, art. cit., 339-40.
[71] *Y*. 9.17.

legged.[72] One of his epithets is *vərəthrajan* "victorious"; and still for Zoroastrians it was the practice to solemnise a *yasna* to Haoma in order to secure the defeat of a hostile army.[73] In the epic tradition it was Haoma who helped Kavi Haosravah to overcome the mighty Fraŋrasyan;[74] and there can be no doubt that in ancient times the "warrior" estate had its share in his cult. It is thought that some evidence for this may have been found at Persepolis from the early 5th century B.C., for there the treasury has yielded a surprising number of beautifully wrought stone pestles and mortars, of the kind used in preparing the *parahaoma*.[75] 97 mortars have been recovered, and 80 pestles, most of them inscribed. The inscriptions, in Aramaic, are brief and fairly uniform in character; but they contain puzzling usages and some unknown words, so that their full import is as yet uncertain. The following is a translation of one among them:[76] "In the administration of 'The Fortress', under the authority of Mithrapāta, the *segan*, Vahufarnah made this large pestle of stone, with one large mortar. Under the authority of Dāta-Mithra, the treasurer. Delivery of year 13(?)." The number of vessels found has led to the suggestion that these were votive offerings, made by men of rank who themselves used the pestles and mortars in the *haoma* cult; but some of the mortars seem to have been broken and mended before they were inscribed, which makes them hardly worthy of a gift to a god; and not a single drinking vessel has been unearthed. The finds remain at present, therefore, enigmatic.

In the Zoroastrian *yasna* the first preparation of *parahaoma* is made from *haoma* twigs pounded up with pomegranate leaves, infused in pure water and strained through a sieve which once was made of bull's hairs taken from a sacrificial animal.[77] The infusion is now drunk by the priest, representative of the sixth creation, man; but it seems likely (to judge from the text of the *Hōm Yašt)* that this first *parahaoma* is in fact the vestige of the ancient *madha* which was partaken of formerly by warrior and poet as well as priest—indeed by the initiated of the whole community.[78] Probably in olden times it was made simply of *haoma* infused in water, the pomegranate being a borrowing from the second *parahaoma* of

[72] *Y*. 9.18.
[73] See *Rivāyats*, Unvala, I 284.15, Dhabhar, 278.
[74] *Shāhnāma*, Tehran ed., V 1387 ff., transl. Warner, IV 260 ff. See above, p. 106.
[75] See E. F. Schmidt, *Persepolis* II, 53-6; R. A. Bowman, *Aramaic ritual texts from Persepolis*, Chicago 1970, 5 ff.
[76] See B. A. Levine, "Aramaic ritual texts from Persepolis", *JAOS* XCII, 1972, 72.
[77] On this ritual observance, and on the development among the Parsis of the usage of keeping a sacred bull, the *varasya*, to yield these hairs *(varas)* see further in Vol. III.
[78] For further, textual, reasons for thinking that this *parahaoma* was not in ancient times a part of the *yasna* see below, pp. 265-6.

the Zoroastrian rite, which is purely sacerdotal in character. This is made of three ingredients; *haoma*, pomegranate and milk, resembling thereby the *zaothra* to water offered still by Zoroastrian villagers; and the second *parahaoma* is in fact prepared and offered as a libation, being poured, when the service of consecration is over, into a source of pure water (a well or running stream).[79] This priestly *āb-zōhr* was always associated, it seems, with the *ātaš-zōhr*, the offering to fire, and hence with the blood sacrifice; and this close ritual association is attested in the ancient *Yasna Haptaŋhāiti*, which appears to be the Zoroastrian reworking of a liturgy to accompany these twofold offerings.[80] In it both Ātar and Āpas, Fire and the Waters, are invoked to receive their portions, in solemn ritual terms: "Approach us, O Fire, with the joy of the most joyful . . .".[81] "We call upon you, the Waters . . . Down (we call you) O good ones, (to be) grateful for and pleased with (your) shares of the long-armed offerings, ye living Mothers."[82]

Fire and Water thus received their portions at every solemnisation of the *yasna*, although each service as a whole was also dedicated to an individual god. Haoma too, from whose "body" the offering to the Waters was made, always received his stipulated share of the blood sacrifice, namely "the two jaw-bones with the tongue and left eye";[83] and in the *Hōm Yašt* the god curses the man "be he priest, farmer or warrior, who harms or withholds his portion".[84] This fixed share of each sacrifice was, it seems, set aside for Haoma because he was conceived in the pagan mythology as the divine priest—evidently an Indo-Iranian concept, for the same role is attributed to Soma in India (where too *soma* was regularly offered with blood sacrifice[85]). A mortal priest was entitled to a fixed portion of every sacrifice which he made, and so a share was assigned likewise to the invisible one. In the *Mihr Yašt* it is said that Haoma "was the first to offer up *haomas* with a star-adorned, spirit-fashioned mortar upon high Harā";[86] and as the "swiftly-sacrificing *zaotar*"[87] he made sacrifices in the

[79] See in more detail Boyce, *JRAS* 1966, 112-17.
[80] For the *Nīrangestān* passages which establish this see Boyce, *Henning Mem. Vol.*, 68-9.
[81] *Y.* 36.2.
[82] *Y.* 38.5. The offering is "long-armed" because it reaches up to the gods, see Gershevitch, *AHM*, 180.
[83] *Y.* 11.4. On the symbolism of these particular portions see Duchesne-Guillemin, *Zoroastre*, Paris 1948, 25 f.
[84] *Y.* 11.5-6.
[85] See, e.g., Keith, *Rel. and phil.* II, 327.
[86] *Y.* 10.90. (On the interpretation see Boyce, *Henning Mem. Vol.*, 66 n. 49. The above translation is that favoured by Darmesteter, Lommel and Henning.)
[87] *Yt.* 10.89.

spirit world to other gods—Druvāspā, Mithra and Sraoša are named.[88] It seems that it was the repeated consecrations of *parahaoma* which first created the concept of a god Haoma, just as it was repeated sacrifices of animals which shaped that of Gəuš Urvan; and the fact that the two offerings were regularly made together led in time to the myth of Haoma presiding over both. As often happens in the history of religions, "imagination has given firstly a status and a history and consequently a more continuous life to the intermittent, dull and passive personality which was born from the regular occurrence of sacrifices."[89] It was presumably because *haoma* played so great a part in daily life that in this case the divinity thus created acquired a rich mythology, with, naturally, the various aspects of his character being all related ultimately to the plant which he represented. Since this plant was regarded as chief of medicinal herbs (being wholesome for man and beast) the god Haoma was reverenced as a healer, able to bestow health and strength.[90] Prayers properly addressed to him bring well-being,[91] and if pestilence threatens, a *yasna* should be solemnised in his honour.[92] Then because of the intoxicating property of the plant, and its ability to awake battle-fury, he became himself a fighting hero. Yet as lord of plants he could also give good harvests, and *yasnas* were devoted to him so that he might vouchsafe them;[93] and since he could bestow not only fertility but also the highest qualities of mind and body, women prayed to him for illustrious sons.[94] (The heroic Thraētaona and Kərəsāspa were both, as we have seen,[95] born to their fathers because the latter pressed *haoma* for drinking.) Then, although he is the divine sacrificer, Haoma is compassionate to the animals whom he nurtures through plants, and careful that the rituals should be observed whereby their souls can attain their appointed place in the hereafter. He is therefore regarded, with Gəuš Urvan and Gəuš Tašan, as a divinity with especial charge of animals.[96] In all this, as in his aspect of priest, he was evidently conceived anthropomorphically; yet so close was his asso-

[88] *Yt.* 9.17, 10.88; *Y.* 57.19. In these associations the link between Haoma and the blood sacrifice seems doubly stressed, for Druvāspā as protector of animals is closely allied to Gəuš Urvan, and the especial connection between Mithra and the animal offering seems old. The verse to Sraoša derives from that to Mithra, see below, p. 271.
[89] Hubert-Mauss, op. cit., 81.
[90] E.g., *Y.* 10.9.
[91] *Y.* 10.18; cf. *Saddar Bundahišn* XLIV. 29, ed. Dhabhar, 116: *tan-dorošti hōm yazad yaštan* "for health, sacrifice to Hōm Yazad."
[92] *Rivāyats*, Unvala, I 284 (marginal addition), Dhabhar, 278.
[93] Ibid., Unvala, I 284.14, Dhabhar, 278.
[94] This is still practice among orthodox Parsis.
[95] Above, p. 97.
[96] For references see Boyce, *Henning Mem. Vol.*, 72.

ciation with the plant *haoma* that invocations of him often blend the concepts of divinity and herb. Thus at the beginning of the *Hōm Yašt* Haoma is represented as approaching Zoroaster himself, who addresses him with these words: "Who are you, O man, the fairest whom I have seen of all the corporeal world?"[97] And Haoma replies: "I am Haoma. Gather me, press me for drink, praise me for strengthening."[98] In his human shape he is hailed as "green-eyed" *(zairi.dōithra-)*[99] but this greenness comes from the plant. As plant and god he has the epithet of "furthering *aša*" *(aša.vazah-)*,[100] which associates him with the Ahuras, the guardians of order. He is therefore fittingly called *hukhratu-* "of good wisdom"[101] (Soma being similarly invoked as *sukratu-*). Another distinctive epithet of his is *dūraoša-* (Vedic *duroṣa-*); but the meaning of this is much debated.[102]

To turn back from this god of the cult to the cult itself, the problem existed, for the Iranians as for other peoples, of how offerings made to the divine beings should be actually conveyed to them. The *zaothras* to fire and water were consigned to these two elements, to be consumed by the one and absorbed by the other—true sacrifices, therefore, which were wholly lost to the worshipper; and in Indian ritual a little of every offering, even of the liquid *soma*, was placed on the fire, the "mouth of the gods", to be consumed by it on behalf of the divinity concerned. The Iranians, however, gave to fire only those offerings which were intended for it itself (dry wood, incense, fat). As for the gods in general, according to Strabo[103] the Persians claimed that they required only the "soul" of the victim; and certainly still today the Zoroastrian priests are at pains to release the "soul" or essence of each offering, conceived of as its odour or *bōy*, to gratify the divinity. This they do by slicing open fruits and vegetables, grilling wheaten cakes, and roasting or seething the flesh of the sacrificial animal. Thereafter almost all of what has been consecrated is divided up, by the man who has made the offering, between priests and the poor, and his friends and kin. Yet there is also a practice, of which

[97] *Y.* 9.1.
[98] *Y.* 9.2. For the interpretation by Henning of *staomaine* as "for strength" see apud Boyce, art. cit., 63 n. 4.
[99] *Y.* 57.19.
[100] E.g. *Y.* 10.1.
[101] *Y.* 9.23, 10.2.
[102] E.g. *Y.* 9.2. For earlier treatments of this word see Geiger, *Die Amša Spəntas*, 77 n. 2. Professor Bailey, in a letter to the writer of June 1970, modified the interpretation which he proposed in *BSOAS* XX, 1957, 53-8, conjecturing that the second element might be *auš-* "plant", connected with Av. *avah-*, cf. RV *avaśa-m* "fodder", the whole word being an adj. meaning "of a *pungent plant".
[103] XV. 3.13.

the Persians did not perhaps tell Strabo, whereby a portion of the sacrifice is set aside and conveyed to the god in a different way. In the account given in the *Bundahišn* of the first blood sacrifice to be made by man it is said that the portion for the fire *(bahr ī ātakhš)* was laid directly on the flames, but that the portion for the gods *(bahr ī yazdān)* was tossed up into the sky, and a vulture swooped and carried it off, "as in recent times dogs have eaten the meat" *(čun nazdist gōšt sagān khward)*.[104] Certainly to this day at holy festivals and solemn rituals orthodox Zoroastrians gather up a little of every kind of food which has been consecrated and give it to a dog, with recitation of Avesta.[105] Moreover, the strictly orthodox used never to eat food themselves without first giving something to a dog;[106] and it remains the clearly-realised belief in the most conservative villages of Iran that what is thus given to a dog reaches the other world of gods and departed souls. Hence it is general still among pious Zoroastrians of the old school to give a dead person's food thrice a day to a dog for the three days that the soul remains on earth; and at all ceremonies of remembrance a portion of the food offerings is given to a dog, the living intermediary between the seen and unseen. A link between the dog and the souls of the dead is found also in the Vedas,[107] so that this belief presumably has its roots in the Indo-Iranian past; but that the dog can act as representative of the gods themselves, receiving on their behalf a portion of the offerings, seems a purely Iranian concept, which perhaps developed only slowly through analogy with practices on behalf of the dead. The usage with regard to the divine beings is today perhaps most clearly to be seen with Haoma's share of the sacrifice. This is now represented in the ritual by the dead animal's tongue; and while this is being consecrated to Haoma it is roasted, which releases the *bōy*, and thereafter it is given ceremonially to a dog.[108]

Since the portion of the dog is necessarily small, even with this ritual development most of the offerings remain to be shared among the worshippers. In the case of the blood sacrifice great importance was attached in both Iran and India to seven portions of the inwards of the victim, which in present Zoroastrian usage are called the *andom* or "parts".[109] In Iran these are prepared in an especial way for roasting, and are then consumed with particular concentration of mind and spirit. Especial rites

[104] *GBd.* XIV.21-2 (BTA, 131).
[105] See Modi, *CC*, 350; Boyce, *JRAS* 1966, 112; *BSOAS* XXXI, 1968, 285.
[106] This usage is still observed by a few old people in the Irani villages, see Vol. IV.
[107] See above, pp. 116-17.
[108] See in detail Boyce, *Henning Mem. Vol.*, 73-5.
[109] See Boyce, *JRAS* 1966, 107-8.

were used in India also for the preparation of the seven portions, for it was held that they in particular represent the *iḍā* of the blood sacrifice. "An essential part of all rituals is . . . the communal eating of the *iḍā*, that is, an especial part of the sacrificial food regarded as the 'blessing of the sacrifice'. In the Agnihotra this *iḍā* is the remains of the sacrificed milk, at the full- and new-moon sacrifices it is a part of the sacrificial cakes . . ., at the animal sacrifice, a part of the animal, at the *soma*-sacrifice a part of the *soma* drunk after the sacrifice."[110] The Avestan word *īžā*, etymologically identical with Vedic *iḍā/iḷā*,[111] appears to be used in this same way by Zoroaster himself.[112] In India *Iḍā* is personified as a goddess, and a personification of *Īžā* appears likewise in the *Gāthās*, notably in *Y*.50.8, where the expression *padāiš . . . īžayå* "in the footsteps of *Īžā*" has been felicitously compared with Vedic *íḷāyās padé* "in the footstep of *Iḷā*", both expressions containing an allusion to the goddess of sacrifice "whose footsteps drop with fat" *(ghṛtápadī)*.[113]

The importance attached by Zoroastrian and Brahman to partaking of the consecrated food and drink leads readily to comparisons between their observances and the communion meals of other faiths; and Hubert and Mauss sought to establish that the blood and *soma* sacrifices of India both involved the death of a god, and so, through many comparisons with other religious observances, they brought these into association with the "Christian ritual of sacrifice".[114] The same comparison has more recently been made by Zaehner with the Iranian *haoma*-ritual.[115] It happens that in *Y*.11.4 Haoma is called the "son of Ahura Mazdā" (a term more frequently applied to Fire). By emphasizing this, and selecting other material to throw into prominence the "death" of the god, his "real presence" in the *parahaoma*, and his "resurrection", with his death again in the next act of worship, it is possible to present the Iranian *haoma*-offering as if it were the Christian communion rite in an older and less familiar form. But if all the material is properly taken into consideration in its own religious setting, the *haoma*-ritual with its intention appears as something very different. As Keith has pointed out with regard to that of *soma*, this is basically "the offering to the god of the intoxicating drink, which in itself, on the other hand, creates the conception of the god Soma";[116] and it is only

[110] Gonda, *Rel. Indiens* I, 106, see further 145-6.
[111] See H. Humbach, "*Milchprodukte in zarathustrischen Ritual*", *IF* LXIII, 1957, 44-7, and on Vedic *iḍā/iḷā* Burrow, *BSOAS* XVII, 1955, 326-45.
[112] See Humbach, art. cit., 41-4.
[113] See Humbach, loc. cit.
[114] Op. cit., 93.
[115] See his *Teachings of the Magi*, 126, 129; *Dawn*, 93-4.
[116] Keith, *Rel. and Phil.* II, 332.

later in the *Brāhmaṇas* that the thought is expressed that the pounding of the plant involves the death of *soma*. The passages containing this idea show, however, that there was "no serious or real feeling for the death of the god: they are products of speculation, not of deep religious conviction".[117] In Zoroastrian literature there is not even a trace of such a thought. As for the blood sacrifice, Keith's comments on the Brahmanic observance apply also to the Iranian one:[118] "There is not the slightest sign in the elaborate ritual, nor in the formulae which are recorded in full, that there was any idea that the death of the victim was the ritual death of one of the gods, or that the ceremony was a sacrament, in which the worshippers renewed or strengthened their union with the god by a common meal . . . The Iḍā is the divine power present in the food when eaten: there is no question of the death and eating of a divinity".

This divine power is brought into the offerings through the act of consecration, that is, through sacred words or *mąthras* uttered by the priest, and rituals duly performed by him with right intention. Very great power was attributed to *mąthras*; and in later Zoroastrian practice every ritual act is not only accompanied by sacred words but set around by them, so that they form an invisible barrier between it and the forces of harm.[119] This was probably pagan usage also, for the ancient *Yasna Haptaŋhāiti* consists of seven chapters, six of which appear to encircle, in two groups of three, the central one, which originally accompanied the highest point of the ritual, the main sacrificial offering.[120] In due course in the Zoroastrian liturgy the whole *Yasna Haptaŋhāiti* came to be enclosed by Zoroaster's own *Gāthās*, the most sacred of *mąthras*, which again were divided into two groups and set around it to provide it with complete security; and the *Gāthās* themselves were in time enclosed in their turn by the other texts of the *yasna*, so that the liturgy grew to be like a fortress with many curtain walls, each helping to give protection and greater strength to what lay at the centre. It was of the greatest importance that such walls should be strong, that is, that the *mąthras* should be properly conceived and spoken, so that the rituals which they accompanied should be fully effective.

The priest performing the rituals was required to be in a state of complete ritual purity, and had to concentrate all his own ritual power,

[117] Ibid., 460.
[118] Ibid., 326 with n. 2.
[119] See Boyce and Kotwal, "Zoroastrian *bāj* and *drōn*", *BSOAS* XXXIV, 1971, 56-73, 298-313.
[120] For the ritual indications in the *Nīrangestān* see Boyce, *Henning Mem. Vol.*, 68 with nn.

through his thoughts and the gaze of his eyes, on the objects to be blessed. Once the divine power had been brought into the offerings, only those might partake of them who were in a fit state to do so. Preliminary lustration was essential,[121] either with pure water or with urine of cow or bull—another practice common to the Indians and Iranians. This ritual requirement meant that cattle were always kept by priests, who were necessarily familiar with their handling; and this is therefore an observance which has given constant life to the ancient cow-symbolism of nomad days. In Iran and India cattle-urine is used for both outward and inward cleansing; but Zoroastrian observance requires that purity of body should be accompanied by a fit moral state. In pagan Iran the qualifications demanded of worshippers tended to be more arbitrary, with moral and amoral conditions intermingled. Thus Arədvī Sūrā Anāhitā forbade those to partake of her *zaothras* who were crazy, or distempered, lying, cowardly or spiteful; but she also rejected the leper, the blind and deaf, and all those physically deformed.[122] The bandit and the prostitute were among those banned from the offerings to Tištrya;[123] and in order to partake of Mithra's *zaothras* a worshipper must bathe on successive days and nights and undergo ritual chastisement,[124] presumably to drive out sin. Aši, a pagan goddess of abundance, forbade her offerings to the sterile—old men and women, young girls and boys.[125]

The actual place of sacrifice in Zoroastrian and Brahman usage is of great simplicity, and its lack of any permanent features (such as an altar or fixed fire-stand) can readily be understood as being due to millennia of nomadic life on the steppes. All that is needed is a small flat space upon which can be marked out a sacred precinct, now called by the Zoroastrians a *pāvi* or "pure place", by the Brahmans a *vedi*.[126] The *vedi*, usually prepared at the house of the sacrifier, is either slightly raised or slightly sunk, and irregularly shaped, being narrowest in the middle. The *pāvi* is flat and rectangular, enclosed by a shallow furrow. Nowadays the *pāvi* is usually a permanent area, stone-floored, with a fixed "furrow" set in the stone;[127] but it is still permissible to make one in any clean place that can be sancti-

[121] Although the Zoroastrians insist on scrupulous cleanliness of the whole person as essential for those taking part in religious observances, they have evolved nothing so elaborate as the Brahman *dikṣā*, the prolonged purification with silence and fasting that is undergone by the *yajamāna* and his wife before the *soma* sacrifice (see, e.g. Oldenberg, *Rel.*, 397 ff.).

[122] *Yt.* 5. 92-3.

[123] *Yt.* 8. 59-60.

[124] *Yt.* 10.122.

[125] *Yt.* 17.54. On this see further above, pp. 65-6.

[126] On the *vedi* see Hillebrandt, *Ritualliteratur*, 14, 112.

[127] See Modi, *CC*, 108-10, 249-50.

tied and kept sanctified during the course of the ritual.[128] In the Indian rite the *vedi* is strewn with grass, now called *kuśa* but formerly *barhis*. The Iranians too used to strew grasses, which they called *barəsman*, later *barsom*.[129] Two concepts appear to have existed concerning this strew. It was spread beneath the feet of the sacrificial animal, and the flesh when dressed was laid upon it for consecration,[130] because "the victim has plants as its body; verily thus he (the priest) makes the victim have its full body".[131] It was also thought that the grass formed a seat for the gods when they came as guests to receive the offerings—for one could not expect the divine beings to be ever present in the neighbourhood of *vedi* or *pāvi*, as they might be thought to dwell in a temple or permanently holy place.[132] (Temples do not seem to have been established even by Zoroastrians before the 4th century B.C., and had no place in the pagan cult.) Fire was always present at the Indian and Iranian rites, burning in a low container at a level with the priest's eye and hand as he sat upon the ground; and after the ceremony was over, the sanctified strew was burnt,[133] as is the dry vegetable matter of rituals by Zoroastrians to this day.[134] From the strew, it seems, the priests used formerly to take up a handful of the grass and hold it while reciting, apparently to share in its pure and protective powers,[135] conceivably also as acknowledgement that all flesh is grass, and priest and victim kin. In time twigs or rods came to be used for this purpose instead of grass, but in both Iran and India the name for these twigs, held in a bundle by the celebrating priest, continued to be the same as that of the strew. In the Avesta *barəsman* has both meanings. In living Zoroastrianism the custom of the strew has been abandoned, and *barsom* means only the twigs held by the priest.[136] In Zoroastrianism as in Brahmanism the number of these twigs varies according to the ceremony.[137] Nowadays they are only a few inches long, but ancient sculptures show the *barəsman* as between one and two feet in length.

The vessels and utensils used in the religious services are, like the pre-

[128] In Yazd in 1964 the writer saw a *pāvi* prepared for the *yasna* at a priest's house, with the furrows marked in the earth of the enclosed courtyard.

[129] See most recently Thieme, *ZDMG* CVII, 72-5.

[130] Herodotus, I.132.

[131] *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* II.2.11. (transl. A. B. Keith, *Harvard Oriental Series* XXV, 143).

[132] See Oldenberg, *Rel.*, 344-5.

[133] See ibid., 345. Oldenberg interprets the action as being to destroy what might be dangerous to men because it had been made holy by contact with the gods.

[134] I.e. the *barsom* twigs and leaf-tie, and the fibres of the pounded *hōm*. (Information from Dr. Firoze Kotwal.)

[135] See Thieme, art. cit., 75.

[136] It is still referred to in the Pahlavi *Nirangestān*, ed. Sanjana, fol. 85 V 11 f., transl. Bulsara 198 (but with *barsom* as "twigs" where it should be "grass").

[137] See Modi, *CC*, 261-3; Haug, *Essays*, 283-4.

cinct itself, of a basic simplicity, and are readily portable. Each thing is purified and consecrated anew (like the *pāvi*) for each ceremony or series of ceremonies; and when the service is over its sanctity ceases and it may be freely handled. The utensils needed for the *yasna* today appear essentially the same as those used in the Indo-Iranian period, since they and those of the Brahman rite seem in the main to share a common ancestry.[138] They are a container for fire; bowls for the various liquids (water, milk, the *parahaoma*); a knife or knives; a pestle and mortar for pounding the *haoma*-twigs,[139] and a hair-sieve for straining the pulp.[140] In the Younger Avesta mention is made of mortars of stone and of metal;[141] and the Persepolis treasury has yielded its beautifully-fashioned mortars and pestles of polished stone, as well as ones of bronze.[142] In present times these vessels are always of metal. The ritual knife must likewise be wholly of metal, haft as well as blade,[143] since other materials (such as wood or horn) are more porous, and it is held that they cannot be properly purified for consecration. The container for fire is also now regularly of metal, although in Iran in the not very distant past clay ones were also sometimes used.

Priestly rituals were not, however, confined to the *pāvi* and the ceremonies performed there. Zoroastrians sometimes call those which must be solemnized within a sanctified precinct in the highest purity "inner" rituals; but there are also a number of "outer" rituals, which are minor ones that may be celebrated anywhere—at home, on the mountains, by streams, or in the fields. One regularly performed is the *āfrīnagān* or ceremony of blessing, which may be solemnized in honour of any member of the pantheon, to reverence him, to secure his favour, or to thank him for benefits received; and this probably continues some form of pagan usage. Animal sacrifice, too, was by no means restricted to the *pāvi* and the priestly *haoma* ceremony, but was offered also as a separate rite, as the *yašts* abundantly attest.[144] It was thus, evidently, that it was observed by

[138] Drawings of the vessels and utensils used in Zoroastrian rituals were first published by Anquetil du Perron, *ZA* II, Pl. X, XI (pp. 532, 534). These were reproduced by Molé, *L'Iran ancien*, Paris 1965, 90-1. Independent drawings, with plans of the *pāvi*, were published by Darmesteter, *ZA* I, Pl. VI (p. lxvi). The *māh-rūy* (a pair of metal supports, crescent-shaped, across which the priest lays the *barsom* twigs at certain points in the *yasna* ceremony) has no Indian counterpart.

[139] See above, p. 157, n. 58.

[140] In India the sieve is of fine wool; for the ancient hair-sieve in Iran see *Visperad* 10.2.

[141] *Vd.* 14.10; *Y.* 22.2; *Vr.* 10.2.

[142] See E. F. Schmidt, *Persepolis* II, 53 ff. with Pl. 23; R. A. Bowman, *Aramaic ritual texts from Persepolis*, 44-52 with Pl. 2.

[143] See Modi, *CC*, 271.

[144] For animal sacrifice as a separate rite in India see Hillebrandt, *Ritualliteratur*, 73, 121-4; Keith, *Rel. and phil.* II, 324-6; Gonda, *Rel. Indiens* I, 147-9. In the Avestan *yašts*,

Herodotus in the 5th century B.C.,[145] when it was performed in a manner very similar to that still practised at their mountain shrines by the Zoroastrians of Yazd.[146] At such sacrifices the victim (as always, well fed and cared for)[147] is decked out with ribands tied around its horns, and is led or often carried shoulder-high up the mountain to the sound of pipe and drum. There it is borne in joyful procession seven times around the holy place (a living rock[148]), against the direction of the sun, and then is led away to be killed at a little distance. The sacrificer (who until the present generation was always a priest, the only man sufficiently pure to perform this high ritual act) kisses the animal's cheek before slaying it, in a gesture of kinship and contrition. Certain *mąthras* or passages of Avesta are prescribed to accompany the act of sacrifice; and afterwards the priest consecrates the appropriate portions to Haoma. The rest of the flesh is seethed in a cauldron[149] and partaken of by the sacrifier and those with whom he chooses to share it, some portions being always given to the priest and the poor. These observances appear to be very ancient, of a type probably carried on through millennia by the Iranians at high and holy places, in homage, as Herodotus records, to God, and to "Sun, Moon, Earth, Fire, Water and Winds".

Such sacrifices at Zoroastrian shrines may be made by an individual whenever he wills, and for a variety of reasons—in worship or thanksgiving, as an act of penitence, or in self-dedication to some vow.[150] This was presumably true also in the pagan past. A priest's presence is necessary at this or any other major rite; and it is through the performance of ceremonies that down the generations the Iranian and Indian priests have received the wherewithal to live, sometimes in princely fashion, sometimes humbly. Gifts to the priests, called *dakṣiṇā* by the Brahmans, *ašōdād* by the Zoroastrians,[151] were regarded as an essential part of a ceremony, and

whereas Zoroaster is represented as making the full priestly *haoma* sacrifice (see *Yt.* 5.104), heroes, as laymen, offer only the blood sacrifice (see, e.g., ibid. 20-81 and further below, p. 269 with n. 82, on the priestly rite).

[145] Herodotus, I.132.

[146] See Boyce, *BSOAS* XXX, 1967, 43.

[147] See Boyce, *JRAS* 1966, 108-9; and cf. the Indian practice, Hillebrandt, *Ritualliteratur*, 73.

[148] See Boyce, *BSOAS* XXX, 43-4.

[149] Herodotus states, accurately, that the flesh was seethed; cf. the Indian practice at the *paśubandha*, Hillebrandt, *Ritualliteratur*, 123. Seething rather than roasting was a practical matter at these mountain sacrifices, with no domestic oven to hand.

[150] It must be emphasised that it is only the Irani branch of the Zoroastrian community that maintains these ancient rites of sacrifice, and even in Iran they are in process of being abandoned. On the similarity in intention of the ancient Vedic sacrifices see Hillebrandt, *Ritualliteratur*, 73.

[151] Middle Iranian *ašōdād* (with its variant *ahlawdād*) means literally "given to a righteous man", an *ašavan*, i.e. a priest. The Avestan term is not recorded.

were they lacking the ritual would not be complete or effective.[152] They "belonged to the sacrifice as ambrosia belongs to the gods, as rivers to the sea".[153]

In Zoroastrian Iran the cult is unified, and traces of more varied practices are to be found chiefly in prohibitions. Thus in a passage in *Yašt* 5 the prophet is represented as asking Arədvī Sūrā how sacrifices should be made to her, and she replies that *zaothras* may be offered only between sunrise and sunset.[154] If any are offered during the hours of darkness, then "these *zaothras* which come to me too late . . . the *daēvas* receive them, running, clapping their hands, leaping, shouting, because, not being received (by me) they go in sacrifice to the *daēvas*".[155] In the *Nīrangestān* it is said forcibly: "He who makes a libation to the Waters between the setting and the rising of the sun does no better than if he were to cast it into the jaws of a . . . dragon."[156] Similarly in the *Brāhmaṇas* evil powers are represented as ever vigilant and hopeful of intercepting the offerings made to the gods. In both Iran and India the morning is regarded as the most auspicious time for religious rites; but whereas in Vedic India this was merely the favoured time,[157] in Zoroastrian Iran there is an absolute prohibition against celebrating the *yasna* at any other period of the day.[158] In India it is permissible to make an offering of *soma* after sunset, so that there may in this be a divergence between the *ahuric* and *daēvic* cults; or the distinction may lie between Zoroastrianism and Iranian paganism. Moreover, even before hostility developed in Iran between worshippers of the two groups of gods, there must have been beliefs in evil powers which might benefit from wrongly-offered worship, and so grow strong to man's detriment—hence, evidently, the insistence that rituals and prayers should be carried out exactly, so that worship might be effective and please the divinity for whom it was intended. For it is only when well-worshipped *(huyašta-)* that the god is favourable. "Who" (demands Mithra) "thinks that I am to be worshipped with a good sacrifice *(huyašti-)*, who with a bad sacrifice *(dužyašti-)*?"[159] "Woe to the . . . man on whose behalf a priest who is not righteous *(ašavan-)*, who is not instructed, who does not embody the sacred word, takes his stand behind the *barəsman* (twigs), even if he spreads the *barəsman* (grass) out fully, even if he performs a long act of worship".[160] "O men, is . . . Gāuš Urvan, created by the Creator, wise, no longer worthy of sacrifice and prayer" (demands the *ašavan* priest) "since now the *daēvic* Vyāmburas and the men who worship *daēvas* make the blood flow, shedding it like water . . .? Since now the *daēvic* Vyāmburas and the men who worship *daēvas* bring to the fire these plants called *hapərəsī-*, the wood called *nəmadhkā-*?"[161]. Plainly when such obscure black practices prevailed, the souls of the animals butchered in droves, without proper rites, did not ascend to Gāuš Urvan, to strengthen and gladden him, and thereby the whole physical creation. Some of the rites thus rejected as "daēvic" by Zoroastrians were evidently in origin propitiatory, intended to appease the powers of evil. Among these appears the Old Persian observance described by Plutarch: ". . . pounding in a mortar a herb called 'omomi' they invoke Hades and darkness; then having mingled it with the blood of a slaughtered wolf, they bear it forth into a sunless place and cast it away".[162] Among the Brahmans propitiatory rites are performed each day. Thus of the five "great offerings" *(mahāyajnāḥ)* which are obligatory for householders twice daily, one is an offering for the demons, to be placed by the household rubbish-heap.[163] At high rituals the blood of the animal sacrifice is offered to the powers of darkness, being poured into a hole in the ground to the west of the *vedi*.[164] It is part of the greatness of Zoroastrianism that the prophet set his face unflinchingly against any such conciliation of the forces of evil.

As well as private daily observances by each individual, and the daily rites performed by priests for the maintenance of the world, there were evidently seasonal festivals in which the whole community joined. As we have seen,[165] pagan Iran had its religious calendar, going back, it seems, to Indo-Iranian times, since Indians and Iranians had in common a religious year of 360 days, divided into 12 months of 30 days each. In India this is still used by Brahmans, and is called the *savana* year, because by it were

[152] See Lévi, *La doctrine du sacrifice*, 90-1; Hillebrandt, *Ritualliteratur*, 140-1. On the basis of the *Brāhmaṇas* Gonda (*Rel. Indiens* I, 43) goes so far as to say that it is wrong to render *dakṣiṇā* as "priestly recompense" since it is rather itself a sacrificial gift given to the priest, "through which the sacrifice is strengthened and completed"; but this typically Brahmanic concept finds no echo in Zoroastrianism.

[153] See Hillebrandt, *Ritualliteratur*, 16.

[154] *Yt.* 5.91.

[155] *Yt.* 5.95; cf. *Vd.* VII.79.

[156] *Nīrangestān* 48, see Darmesteter, *ZA* III, 77. Benveniste, *Rev. Ét. Arméniennes* VII, 1927, 8-9. The same simile occurs in a Persian *rivāyat*, see *Rivāyats*, ed. Unvala, I 346.7-8, transl. Dhabhar, 306, where it is said that to give alms to the wicked "is like putting food into the mouth of a dragon".

[157] See Hillebrandt, *Ritualliteratur*, 73.

[158] See Boyce, *BSOAS* XXXII, 1969, 26-7.

[159] *Yt.* 10.108.

[160] *Yt.* 10.138.

[161] *Yt.* 14.54-5. *Hapərəsī* has been identified as the evergreen juniper.

[162] Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris*, 46. See Benveniste, *The Persian religion according to the chief Greek texts*, 70, 73 ff.; Zaehner, *Zurvan*, 13 ff.

[163] See Gonda, *Rel. Indiens* I, 125-6.

[164] See Hillebrandt, *Ritualliteratur*, 123.

[165] See above, p. 122.

regulated the seasonal pressings of *soma*. The *savana* year is an artificial one, which is kept in relation with the natural year by the fairly frequent intercalations of a thirteenth month; and the ancient Iranians too are said to have intercalated frequently (every 6 years, in theory at least)[166] to keep their religious year in accord with the seasons. The "Avestan" people, like others, must have distinguished the months by names; but the only pre-Zoroastrian month-names to survive are those of the Old Persians. The meanings of these are by no means wholly clear, but they seem to be of a mixed kind, referring to farming activities, religious observances and the like.[167]

In this old religious calendar there were evidently a number of feast days. The Indo-Iranian year appears to have been divided into two seasons, called by the Vedic Indians *ayanas*. One reckoning of these *ayanas* was that they ran from the spring to the autumn equinox, from the autumn to the spring. For the Indians the first of these was "spring and summer and the rains", and this they called the "season of the gods" *(devayāna)*; the other, autumn and winter, being the time of darkness and death, was the "season of the fathers" *(pitṛyāṇa)*.[168] The pagan Iranians appear to have marked the dividing equinoxes, which they too considered as the poles of the natural year, by two great feasts. That of the spring equinox is still kept joyfully by Zoroastrians, and probably many features of the present festival go back to pagan times, for it is essentially an occasion for rejoicing at the end of winter, and is celebrated out of doors amid the renewed greenness of earth.[169] The feast of the autumn equinox appears to have been dedicated of old to Mithra, and is known from Achaemenian times as the Mithrakāna (later Mihragān). The festival was thus celebrated when the sun with which Mithra is linked had achieved its yearly task of ripening the crops and bringing increase and fatness to herds.[170] Sacrifices were accordingly made to Mithra in thanksgiving. In some Iranian villages Zoroastrians still bring an offering from their crops to the fire-temple at Mihragān, and each household then sacrifices an animal to the *yazata*.[171] As well as being a thank-offering, the blood

[166] See Bīrūnī, *Chronology of ancient nations*, ed. Sachau, 11.

[167] On the OP calendar see Arno Poebel, *AJSLL* LV, 130-41, 285-314; LVI, 121-45; W. Hinz, *ZDMG* XCVI, 326-31: R. Kent, *Old Persian, Historical appendix* IV. For discussions of the month names see the entries under each in W. Brandenstein and M. Mayrhofer, *Handbuch des Altpersischen*, Wiesbaden 1964.

[168] See G. R. Kaye, *Hindu Astronomy*, 27; Taqizadeh, *Old Iranian Calendars*, 14 n. 1.

[169] There is no evidence, *pace* Dumézil and Widengren, to associate this festival with either rain or dragon-killing, see above, p. 102 n. 110.

[170] See Bīrūnī, op. cit., 223.

[171] See Boyce, "Mihragān among the Irani Zoroastrians", *Mithraic Studies* I, ed. Hinnells, 106-08.

sacrifice at this festival had probably a symbolic meaning also. It may well have been offered, that is, in re-enactment of the death of the mythical "Uniquely-created Bull", from whose body in the beginning sprang the seed of animals and all useful plants, the intention being to ensure that corn and grasses sprouted afresh in the coming year, under the quickening sun, and that offspring were born again to the herds.[172] This is held to be one of the purposes of the bull-sacrifice to Apollo at the Athenian Bouphonia, and of similar sacrifices at the harvest-celebrations of other peoples. "The periodical return of the sacrifice at times when the earth became bare assured the continuity of natural life".[173] Such significance attaching to blood sacrifice at the Mithrakāna would account for the central part assigned to the offering at this festival, and for the persistence of the rite into the twentieth century. It might also help to account for the essential role of the bull sacrifice in western Mithraism. In Iran itself, as the *Mihr Yašt* shows,[174] any domestic animal may properly be sacrificed to Mithra, for all useful creatures represent the "Uniquely-created Bull". (There the cow/bull sacrifice itself came to be ritually associated rather with Arədvī Sūrā,[175] presumably because of the connection of the cow and her milk with fertility and libations to the waters.) There is no doubt that, though animal sacrifice was general in the worship of the Iranian gods, it had a particular significance in the worship of Mithra, who thus had an especial link with the divine sacrificer, Haoma. The old pagan association of animal sacrifice with the intoxicating *haoma*-offering is perhaps further emphasized by the odd Sasanian observance whereby Mithrakāna was the one day in the whole year upon which it was proper for the king himself to become drunk;[176] whereas the gift of 20,000 colts at Mithrakāna to the Persian king by the satrap of Armenia[177] was perhaps made at that particular festival because of Mithra's connection with the "swift-horsed" sun. The ethical side of Mithra was also honoured at his feast, as known from Sasanian and later times; but here the problem of distinguishing between pagan and Zoroastrian elements in his cult is at its most acute, and so consideration of these aspects of his festival is best deferred.

Both Indians and Iranians further divided the year into six seasons, the *yāirya ratavō* or "times of the year" of the Avestan people, although it has

[172] See above, p. 139.

[173] Hubert-Mauss, 74. One of the three great sacrifices of the heathen Scandinavians was *i moti vetri til ars* "at the approach of winter; (this sacrifice was) for plenty" (see Chadwick, *Cult of Othin*, 5).

[174] *Yt.* 10.119 (see above, p. 151 n. 23).

[175] See, with references, Boyce, *BSOAS*, XXX, 1967, 42-3.

[176] Ctesias apud Athenaeus, *Deipnosophists* X.45.434d.

[177] Strabo, XI.14.9.530.

been suggested that the similarity in this case may be due to parallel developments rather than stemming from a common Indo-Iranian system.[178] Each of these seasons is marked by a feast.[179] Two celebrate the solstices, namely Maidhyōi.šəma "Midsummer (feast)" and Maidhyāirya "Midyear (feast)". The others were apparently pastoral and farming festivals, which have been interpreted as follows: Maidhyōi.zarəmaya "Midspring", when cattle were first driven out to pasture, Paitišhahya "(the feast of) bringing in the corn", and Ayāthrima "(the feast of) homecoming", when the herds were brought back from summer grazing-lands. The season introduced by Maidhyāirya, at the winter solstice, ended with the spring equinox, and on its last day, which was therefore officially the last day of winter, "the season of the Fathers", was celebrated Hamaspathmaēdaya, the festival of the *fravašis*.[180]

It is not known when the year began for the Indo-Iranians, but some suppose it to have been at the autumn equinox,[181] for the Iranian word for "year" (Av. *sarəd-*, OP. *thard-*) corresponds to Skt. *sarad-* "autumn, year". "Harvest and the great festival associated with it" have frequently been chosen by peoples of different lands as the turning point of the year; but this turning point need not necessarily be of any wide significance.[182] For a pastoral people, who presumably tilled very little of the earth, spring is likely to give more sense of beginnings, with the new grass growing strongly for their herds, and calves being born; while the fact that the festival of the winter solstice was called by them "Midyear" shows that at some time the "Avestan" people regarded the summer solstice as the start of the year. The Vedic Indians too knew two feasts at the solstices, dividing the year for them into *uttarāyaṇa* and *dakṣiṇāyana*, the "left" and "right" seasons[183]; and this may be older than the division into *devayāna* and *pitṛyāṇa*, since observation of the solstices is simpler than of the equinoxes.[184] It is, however, perfectly possible that several annual "beginnings" were recognized simultaneously, as has been known with other peoples, for instance the Jews of old: "on the first day of Nisan is the beginning of the year for the kings and for the festivals. On the first day of Elul is the beginning for the tithing of cattle. On the first day of Tishri

[178] See Taqizadeh, *Old Iranian calendars*, 15.
[179] On the seasonal feasts, later called *gāh* or *gāhāmbārs*, see R. Roth, "Der Kalender des Avesta und die sogenannten Gāhānbār", *ZDMG* XXXIV, 1880, 698-720.
[180] See above, pp. 122-4.
[181] See Markwart, "Das Naurōz" *Modi Mem. Vol.*, Bombay, 1930, 716; Taqizadeh, *Old Iranian calendars*, 13.
[182] See Nilsson, *Primitive Time-Reckoning*, 268 ff.
[183] Kaye, *Hindu Astronomy*, 27; Taqizadeh, op. cit., 14-16.
[184] See Nilsson, op. cit., 311-2.

is the beginning for the years (i.e. the civil calendar), and for the Sabbatic year and the Jubilee years, for the plants and vegetables. On the first day of the month Shebat is the beginning for the tree-fruit."[185] If the Jews could recognize four new-year days, the ancient Iranians may well have had two or three. But whatever the situation was in this respect when Zoroaster was born, the prophet evidently chose (if choice was then necessary) the feast of the spring equinox to be *the* New Year for his people, plainly because of the deep religious symbolism which he saw in the annual resurgence of life at this season. He called it, it seems, the "New Day", Middle Persian Nō Rōz;[186] and as such it is still celebrated by his followers, and even in Muslim Iran. He also, according to tradition, refounded the five seasonal feasts and Hamaspathmaēdaya as holy days of his faith, in honour of the great Aməša Spəntas of his own revelation and the creations which they guard;[187] and it is the fact that in Zoroastrian observance the first of these feasts is Maidhyōi.zarəmaya, "Midspring", which proves that for Zoroaster the "New Day" fell at the spring equinox, and not in autumn or at midsummer.

A number of other festivals of evidently pagan origin survive as major Zoroastrian feasts, clearly because there was no contradiction between their observance and the spirit of the reformed faith. One which was indeed wholly in conformity with Zoroastrianism was Sada or the "Hundred-Days Feast", which appears in origin an ancient fire-festival, held (like similar festivals in many lands) in the depth of winter, to drive back the forces of cold and darkness and help the sun regain its strength. This feast received its name because it was held one hundred days before Nō Rōz and the return of spring (or, in some places, one hundred days *after*

[185] See Nilsson, op. cit., 274, quoting from the Mishna apud E. König, "Kalenderfragen im althebräischen Schrifttum", *ZDMG* LX, 1906, 644.
[186] It is of course pure conjecture that the prophet himself used an Avestan expression meaning "New Day" for the feast; but there is ample evidence for the existence of the more factual term "New Year" (**nava- sard-*), see W. Eilers, *Der alte Name des persischen Neujahrsfestes, Ab. Ak. d. Wissenschaften u. d. Literatur in Mainz*, 1953, No. 2, 59; and it seems possible that the name "New Day" was given by him as having an eschatological implication also.
[187] Had these feasts originated as Zoroastrian holy days, with no previous history, one would expect them to have had religious names rather than ones linking them to the pastoral and farming year. Traditionally, however, their foundation was ascribed to the prophet (see Bīrūnī, *Chronology of ancient nations*, 219); and this suggests that it was he himself who adapted these existing seasonal feasts to give cultic expression to his new doctrines. The fact that the names of the festivals survive only in Younger Avestan forms is naturally of no historical significance in itself: it does not, that is, enable one to determine the epoch at which they were first used. Nor can the existence of a harvest festival (Paitišhahya) prove the lateness of the series, for even in their nomad days, it is thought, the Indo-Iranians had some knowledge of farming, however limited a part it played in their lives.

the seasonal feast of Ayāthrima, which marked the beginning of winter).[188] By Zoroastrians it was (and still is) celebrated with a huge fire lit as darkness falls near a shrine to Mithra (lord of fire and the sun), and close to a stream, since part of its symbolic purpose was to warm the waters and prevent the demon of frost from freezing them fast and so tightening his deadly grip on the world.

As well as this great fire-festival, a feast of the waters, (dedicated in current usage to Arədvī Sūrā), is also evidently of pagan origin, and remained a great annual occasion. Another major festival maintained in Zoroastrian times was the *Tīrikāna, Pahl. Tīragān. This feast, known popularly among the Zoroastrians of Iran as the "feast of Tīr and Teštar", was celebrated as a rain-festival in Yazd and Kerman down to the present century, with a number of pretty observances meant to act as rain-spells.[189] It is probable that most other divinities of pagan Iran (except cult-deities such as Haoma and Gōuš Urvan) had their own especial days of veneration, as they have in Zoroastrianism. In addition there must have been, then as later, particular local cults, which probably often, as in Hindu India and Zoroastrian Iran, centred on the veneration of majestic trees, which were honoured as the representatives of the "creation" of plants, which both lives and gives life to men and cattle.[190]

As for the ways in which festivals were celebrated, in Zoroastrianism the same essential rituals are solemnized at all festivals, with due liturgical modifications—as the mass is solemnized on all holy days in Catholic Christendom. Since the same is broadly true of Brahmanic usage, one may suppose it to have been the case also in pagan Iran. It is likely, therefore, that the essential rites of offerings to the gods, and to fire and water, were made on all occasions, then as now, and that the particular intention of each act of worship was defined by its dedication to a named divinity, and by the recital of special *mąthras* and songs of praise. In addition there were evidently annual observances attached to individual cults, in connection with the divinity's especial powers and functions.

With regard to the celebrants of the rites, presumably in pagan as in later times the laity not only made their own private devotions but also conducted a number of domestic rituals, such as caring for and making

[188] See Boyce, "Rapithwin, Nō Rūz and the feast of Sade" in *Pratidānam, Studies presented to F. B. J. Kuiper*, 213-5, and further in Vol. II. For a collection of articles on the feast by various scholars see *La fête de Sadeh, Publications de la Société d'Iranologie* No. 2, Tehran 1946.

[189] See further in Vol. IV.

[190] See above, p. 143. For a particular instance of the veneration of a tree in Zoroastrian Iran see Boyce, *Festschrift für W. Eilers*, Wiesbaden 1967, 150.

offerings to the hearth fire and local stream or well, and preparing offerings for the family *fravašis*; but all major ceremonies were evidently solemnized by priests, who were trained in the proper way to approach the gods. The laity acquired merit in such observances by providing the offerings and rewarding the priests; and they shared in the act of worship by partaking of the consecrated *zaothras*. The basic similarities in these respects between the Zoroastrian and Brahmanic cults is yet further testimony to the tenacity of the religious tradition of the two peoples, a tradition which in observance as in beliefs seems in many respects to have been moulded and fixed during the far-off days of their shared nomadic past.

PART TWO
ZOROASTER AND HIS TEACHINGS

CHAPTER SEVEN

ZOROASTER

Materials for the life of Zoroaster are to be gleaned from the following sources: firstly, the *Gāthās* themselves, which apart from the evidence which they furnish that the prophet belonged, from the language which he spoke, to the north-east of Iran, supply allusively a number of facts about his family and about incidents in his life. It is not known, however, in what order the *Gāthās*, now arranged metrically, were originally composed, or how many years of Zoroaster's existence they span.[1] Secondly, there is the Younger Avesta. Here the names of the chief personages of the *Gāthās* recur, and some others are added for Zoroaster's family circle, presumably from living tradition; but there is little reference to events, and virtually nothing biographical. The reason for this is evidently that this material was irrelevant to the liturgical texts which alone survive, and was assigned to two books of the Avesta which were especially devoted to the life of the prophet, namely the *Spend Nask* and *Čihrdād Nask*.[2] These works, whose age is unknown, have long since themselves disap-

[1] In his translation of the *Gāthās* (*Zoroastre, Étude critique avec une traduction commentée des Gāthā*, Paris 1948; Eng. transl. by M. Henning, *The Hymns of Zarathustra*, London 1952), J. Duchesne-Guillemin arranged the hymns in what he suggested might be their original order, judged from their content. See also his article "L'ordre des Gāthās", *La Nouvelle Clio* V, 1953 *(Mélanges A. Carnoy)*, 31-7. It is impossible, however, to hope for finality in this matter. Some scholars maintain that the last hymn in the formal arrangement (*Y.* 53) is not by Zoroaster himself; but this appears to be a minority opinion. M. Molé went further in arguing that none of the *Gāthās* could be attributed to Zoroaster. He saw them rather as the liturgy "of an office representing the dramatic struggle of two opposed camps, for which the stake is the purification of the world from all evil" (*Numen* VIII, 1961, 56 = *Zarathustra*, ed. Schlerath, 327); and as such, he maintained, they must have been the work of various unknown authors, who made use of the name of Zoroaster (whether or not a historical person) simply as that of an "archetypal" figure. In putting forward this interpretation Molé ignored the artificial arrangement of the *Gāthās*, which shows that the collection was set in order after the composition of the individual hymns. He also failed to consider the problem of why, unless the *Gāthās* were invested with some especial sanctity, they should have been preserved in an ancient stage of the Avestan language instead of evolving linguistically, like the rest of the *yasna*. His arguments against the "pillar passages" (see below) as evidence for the authenticity of the *Gāthās* seem likewise unconvincing. In general Molé held that the Zoroastrians' own tradition that their religion had been founded by a prophet evolved late, through adaptation to pressure from Islam and a desire to conform to the pattern of the dominant religion. Such an interpretation cannot be accepted in defiance of all the ancient evidence to the contrary. Studies of the *Gāthās* down to 1962 have been surveyed by B. Schlerath, "Die Gathas des Zarathustra", *OLZ* LVII, 1962, 565-89, repr. in *Zarathustra*, ed. Schlerath, 336-59. See also Duchesne-Guillemin, "Les hymnes de Zarathuštra", *RHR* 1961, 47-66.

[2] See West, *SBE* XLVII, ix-xvi.

peared; but there are important sections of certain Pahlavi books, notably the *Dīnkard* and *Selections of Zādspram*, which evidently derive from them, with some explicit citations; and briefer passages on this theme occur scattered through other Pahlavi works. These Middle Persian texts, taken together, constitute the third source for knowledge of the prophet's life, and with the Younger Avesta represent the tradition.[3]

In dealing with this tradition it is necessary to distinguish between the facts, which are what will concern us in the present chapter; the legend, already delineated in the Younger Avesta, whereby the prophet's story was so shaped that he himself became an actor in the teleological drama of which he spoke so much;[4] and the embroideries, proper to hagiography, of supernatural endowments and miraculous adventures, which have their due place in the Pahlavi books and appear in most popular accounts of Zoroaster. The teleological legend is of considerable importance in developed Zoroastrian doctrine, but must necessarily be considered after a discussion of the teachings of the prophet himself, in order that it may appear how it grew out of them.

The facts of Zoroaster's birth and life, as far as they can be determined from these three sources, appear as follows: he was of the Spitaman family[5] (Spitama being evidently a fairly remote progenitor of his house), the son of Pourušaspa and Dughdhōvā.[6] Among his more immediate forbears was Haēčat.aspa,[7] whom the tradition knows as his great-grandfather. These personal names appear appropriate to a people with a pastoral tradition. That of the prophet himself, in Avestan *Zarathuštra, probably means "he who can manage camels", a skill which among a nomad people deserved

[3] The most important of these texts were translated by West, op. cit. (pub. 1897), with an introduction and notes which are still valuable. The *Dīnkard* texts with others (but without those from *Zādspram*) were published in transcription with translation and notes by M. Molé, *La légende de Zoroastre selon les textes pehlevis*, Paris 1967, who included the *Vizīrkird i dīnīg*, a text known to be a fabrication made in India in the 19th century A.C. The 13th-century *Zardušt Nāma* is a poem which has no independent authority, but which introduces few novelties, except such as are clearly flights of fancy. (See the ed., with French translation, by F. Rosenberg, St. Petersburg 1904.) Almost all the material relating to Zoroaster, from Iranian and foreign sources, was brought together, with full references, in a useful but uncritical work by A. V. W. Jackson, *Zoroaster, the prophet of ancient Iran*, New York, 1899.

[4] Molé, who has done the most extensive recent work on the life of the prophet, deliberately neglected to make any such distinction, because he believed that Zoroaster (if he ever existed) had already become a legend before his name was used by the unknown "composers of the Gāthās". In this he followed Darmesteter, *ZA* III, Ch. VI, "La légende de Zoroastre"; but this belongs to that small part of the great French scholar's work which has found no general acceptance.

[5] See *Y.* 46.13; 51.12; 53.1, et pass. in the later literature.

[6] The earliest reference to his father's name is probably that in *Yt.* 5.18. His mother's is supplied by an Avestan fragment, see Darmesteter, *ZA* III, 151.

[7] *Y.* 46.15.

the respect that such a name implies.[8] It appears to be the Old Persian form of it, *Zara.uštra, which yielded Greek Zoroaster, whereas the Medean *Zarat.uštra produced Middle and later Persian Zardušt.[9] The name of the prophet's father (like those of several other persons connected with him, including his great-grandfather), was compounded with the word *aspa* "horse", Pourušaspa signifying "possessing gray horses";[10] and his mother's name, Dughdhōvā, means "one who has milked, milkmaid".[11] These names may well have been traditional in his family, rather than having any particular relevance to the circumstances into which he himself was born.[12] According to the tradition he had four brothers, two older than himself, two younger. Their names are given in a late Pahlavi work,[13] but owing to the ambiguities of the Pahlavi script it is not certain how exactly they should be read.

Nothing is known of Zoroaster's parents except their names; but whatever Pourušaspa's own calling, it seems that Zoroaster must himself have been dedicated from childhood to that of priest.[14] In the *Gāthās* (*Y.* 33.6) he refers to himself as *zaotar*, that is, a fully qualified priest; and in the Younger Avesta the more general term, *āthravan*, is used of him (*Yt.* 13.94). The *Gāthās* themselves, to judge from their intricacy of style, could only have been composed by a man who had undergone a rigorous professional training, which enabled him to pour passionate new thoughts into an elaborate and conventional literary mould. General evidence concerning the priesthood from India and Iran shows that this training began ordinarily at about the age of seven, when a child would be consigned with others to the care of a religious teacher.[15] From that time onward his studies would necessarily claim most of his waking hours, for there was much to learn: rituals and their significance, the art of composing *mąthras* and duly invoking the gods, priestly lore about the nature of this world and the next, together with all the complexities of polytheistic beliefs. After finishing the basic training undergone by all aspirants to the priest-

[8] See Bailey, *TPS*, 1953, 40-2, who interprets the prophet's name as <**zarat.uštra* "he who drives camels", from the base *zar-* "move". For earlier interpretations see Jackson, op. cit., 12-14, 147-9.

[9] See Gershevitch, *JNES* XXIII, 1964, 38.

[10] See Bartholomae, *Air. Wb.* 903.

[11] See Bartholomae, *Air. Wb.* 748.

[12] It is, however, possible that the name Dughdhōvā was evolved to accord with the legend of Zoroaster's birth (see p. 278, below), unless this legend evolved partly to fit his mother's name.

[13] *Zādspram* IX. 4, ed. BTA 60, lxxxvi; transl. West, *SBE* XLVII, 144 (as XV. 5). A table of Zoroaster's family is set out by Jackson, op. cit., 20.

[14] This point was argued in detail (against Moulton and others) by H. Lommel, "War Zarathustra ein Bauer?", *KZ* LVIII, 1931, 248-65, repr. in *Zarathustra*, ed. Schlerath, 33-52.

[15] See above, pp. 7-8.

hood, the prophet must have continued studying in a *zaotar* school, where deeper theological questions were pondered. The *Gāthās* and *Vedas* together suggest that some opposition was sensed of old between the cults of *daēva* and *ahura*,[16] and argument and controversy were probably lively on this theme among his people. Zoroaster's great hymns suggest, moreover, that his spiritual gifts carried the prophet on far beyond merely dogmatic studies, leading him to seek out teachers versed in mantic lore, that is, in the inspired apprehension of the divine. He refers to himself as an initiate, *vaēdəmna*, "one who knows";[17] and his great visionary hymn, *Y.* 44, is composed in a literary convention which "stretches back in unbroken continuity to Indo-European times"[18]—a convention which is known only married to mantic utterances. Although Zoroaster's own contribution to religious thought was to be unique, he belonged, it seems, to a long line of lesser visionaries and priestly seers, whose literary and spiritual disciplines had been transmitted over countless generations.

The only chronology for the events of Zoroaster's life comes from the tradition, which in this respect seems schematized and unreliable, proceeding for the most part in round decades. By the Old Iranian reckoning a boy reached manhood at fifteen, at which age he was invested with the sacred girdle, and probably (in the case of an *āthravan*) initiated priest. According to the tradition, it was five years later, when he was twenty, that Zoroaster left his parents' house against their wishes, and took to a wandering and questioning life.[19] This time-scheme may well be roughly right, since it allows for that period of intensive study which the prophet evidently completed before giving himself up to his own private and individual quest for truth. The depth and intensity of his spiritual search can be deduced from his own words in the *Gāthās*. Finally revelation came to him (according to the tradition in his thirtieth year, which was conventionally the time of full and sage maturity). Allusions to the manner of it, in *Y.* 43, are amplified in one Pahlavi account.[20] Here it is said that Zoroaster was attending a gathering met to celebrate the spring festival (Maidhyōi.zarəma); and that he went at dawn (according to ancient ritual

[16] See above, pp. 53-5, 83.

[17] *Y.* 28.5; 48.3. It was partly on account of this that Nyberg sought to associate Zoroaster with shamanism; but there is no need to leave the Indo-Iranian and Indo-European traditions of manticism to find his spiritual forbears (see above, pp. 8,9).

[18] See Schaeder, "Ein indogermanischer Liedtypus in den Gathas", *ZDMG* XCIV, 1940, 404.

[19] *Zādspram* XVI.1, ed. BTA 73, xci; transl. West, *SBE* XLVII, 152-3 (as XX.7).

[20] *Zādspram* XX-XXI, ed. BTA 77-81, xciii-xciv; transl. West, op. cit., 155-7; on XX.1 see further Boyce, *BSOAS* XXXIII, 1970, 524-5, with n. 42.

practice) to fetch water from a river nearby for the *haoma*-ceremony.[21] He waded deep into the current to draw the purest water; and it was as he returned to the bank—himself necessarily in a state of ritual purity, emerging from the pure element, water, in the freshness of a spring dawn—that he had a vision. He saw standing on the bank a shining being clad in a garment like light itself, who, tradition says, revealed himself as Vohu Manah, Good Intention. By him Zoroaster was brought into the presence of Ahura Mazdā and the other five Immortals, before whom "he did not see his own shadow upon the earth, owing to (their) great light".[22] And it was at that moment that spiritual enlightenment came to him.

This revelation appears to have been the first of a number of times when Zoroaster saw the Lord, or felt conscious of his presence, or heard his words. As has been justly said: "We do not understand Zarathushtra until we see in the *Gāthās* the underlying cause of his zeal: *the meeting with God* ... Zarathushtra's certainty was the result of a vision, a visible manifestation ... he had 'seen' and perceived the Lord".[23] The God whom he thus beheld called the prophet imperatively to his service, a summons which he wholeheartedly obeyed. "For this I was set apart as yours from the beginning" (*Y.* 44.11). "I who have set my heart on watching over the soul in union with Vohu Manah, and as knowing the rewards of Mazdā Ahura for our deeds, while I have power and strength, I shall teach men to seek after the right (*aša-*)" (*Y.* 28.4).

Zoroaster therefore betook himself, inspired by his great vision, to the daunting task of preaching a new doctrine to his fellow-men. His

[21] This ritual act has become obscured for the Parsis because for centuries they have drawn pure water for religious ceremonies from wells. In the Irani villages, however, such water is still brought from streams, and for high rituals it is thus fetched at first light, so that it may be of the greatest possible purity, unpolluted by any diurnal activity. That this is a very ancient tradition is shown by the existence of the parallel Indian *āponaptrīya* ritual, whereby a priest fetches water at dawn for the "mixing of the drink", i.e. the *soma*, from a stream of running water near the *vedi*, see Hillebrandt, *Ritualliteratur*, 129. Naturally in Zoroastrian tradition the river to which the prophet went came to be identified as the Vaŋhvī Dāityā, and it is said to have had four branches, to which symbolic significance is attributed. On this see Molé, *Numen* VIII, 1961, 61 n. 17 (= *Zarathustra*, ed. Schlerath, 332 n. 21). Molé, like other scholars, assumed that Zoroaster was described as going to the river in order to make the libation of *parahaoma*, rather than to fetch pure water for its preparation; but the text says clearly "for the sake of pressing the haoma" *(hōm hunīdan rāy)*. The standard interpretation is in any case ritually impossible for several reasons, one being that the long ceremony of pressing the *haoma* cannot even begin before the sun rises.

[22] *Zādspram*, XXI.9.

[23] Söderblom, *The Living God*. 191-2, 194; cf. Barr, "Principia Zarathustriaca", *Øst og Vest, Afhandlinger tilegnede A. Christensen*, Copenhagen 1945, 130-1; H. H. Schaeder, "Gott und Mensch in der Verkündigung Zarathustras" *Corolla, Ludwig Curtius zum 60 Geburtstag dargebracht*, Stuttgart 1937, 195-6 [repr. in *Der Mensch in Orient und Okzident*, 1960]. For other Gathic passages on Zoroaster's beholding God see *Y.* 31.8; 33. 6-7; 43.5.

words, which he calls "unheeded" (*aguštā*) (*Y.* 31.1), fell at first upon stony ground. According to the tradition ten years passed during which he converted only one person to his beliefs, his cousin Maidhyōimāh, who in the *Farvardīn Yašt* is honoured after the prophet himself, as "the first to give ear to the inspired utterance (*mąθra-*) and teachings of Zoroaster" (*Yt.* 13.95).[24] Although the figure of "ten years" can plainly not be regarded as precise, the process of conversion was evidently painfully slow, and brought with it, it seems, potential danger to the new believer, as the following words suggest: "One coming over to his side ... one must make him known to the kindred (*khvaētu-*) in order to protect him from bloodshed" (*Y.* 46.5).[25] The prophet speaks of his own poverty and the fewness of his supporters (*Y.* 46.2),[26] and of the wickedness of the *kavis* and *karapans* (probably the seers and working priests of the land),[27] whose hostility to himself is implied. He laments to Ahura Mazdā: "To do that which you told me was best shall cause me suffering among men" (*Y.* 43.11); and he names some of those who most afflicted him:[28] the "very great Bāndva" (*Y.* 49.1) with his "wicked teacher, long ago a rebel from righteousness (*aša-*)" (*Y.* 49.2); and Grāhma, who sought to prevent Zoroaster's message being heard, and who maintained rites which the prophet rejected (*Y.* 32.13-14). He also indites the "*kavi's* catamite", who in the depth of winter obstructed him and his servants and horses, who were shivering with cold (*Y.* 51.12).[29]

While he struggled to preach his new religion Zoroaster continued, it seems, to practise as a priest; and towards the end of the great *Y.* 44 (v. 18) he asks the Lord: "Shall I receive for my reward (*mižda-*), through righteousness (*aša-*), ten mares with a stallion and a camel, which were promised to me, O Mazdā, together with your gift of wholeness and life (*haurvatāt-* and *amərətāt-*)?". The reward spoken of here has been compared with the gifts of cattle made to priests by Vedic princes; and the words have been interpreted as a prayer by Zoroaster for the success of his mission, since

[24] "Maidhyōi.mąŋha" is mentioned in *Y.* 51.19. The forged *Vizīrkird ī dīnīg* is attributed to "Mēdyōmāh", evidently on the basis of the *Dinkard*, which shows that the lost Avestan *Varštmānsr Nask* contained "questions put by Mēdyōmāh to Zoroaster on the subject of his birth and how he received the religion, and the replies of Zoroaster" (see Molé, *Légende*, 252).

[25] On these lines see Benveniste, *JA* 1932, 126.

[26] The prophet reckons wealth and rewards alike in the traditional terms of cattle, which was one of the points which led some earlier scholars to doubt his priestly calling.

[27] See above, pp. 11-12.

[28] Such "pillar passages", whose invention would be highly improbable, have always been insisted on by those who have maintained the historicity of Zoroaster. See Moulton, *EZ*, 348 n. 4.

[29] On this passage see Gershevitch, *AHM*, 284-6.

such gifts were a sign of approval and acceptance.[30] By another interpretation the prophet here seeks his reward from God himself.[31] The naming together of cattle and life as gifts from on high is traditional;[32] and the general implication of his words, it is suggested, is to ask whether his pious striving will meet its due reward in *this* life, as well as in the hereafter. Whichever interpretation is right, it is agreed that Zoroaster expresses himself in this verse in an idiom that was wholly natural for a working priest.

After long years, discouraged by the obduracy of his fellow-countrymen, the prophet resolved, it seems, to depart from them, crying out in darkness of spirit: "To what land to flee, where shall I go to flee?[33] From the kindred and sodality they thrust me out. Not satisfying to me is the community to which I should belong, nor yet the wicked rulers of the land" (*Y.* 46.1).[34] The expression *dahyu* "land" had broad implications, meaning, as we have seen, at times probably no more than one enclosed valley, ruled by its own chief; and the linguistic evidence of the other Gathic and Younger Avestan texts suggests that Zoroaster did not in fact travel far from his birthplace. In his new land he was better received. There, it seems, he won the ear of its queen, Hutaosā, who in course of time "thought according to the religion, spoke according to the religion, acted according to the religion, ... believed devotedly in and understood the Mazdā-worshipping religion, and gave fair fame to the community" (*Yt.* 9.26).[35] It was probably through his wife that the king, Kavi Vīštāspa,[36] was converted to Zoroaster's teachings, "and came forward as the arm and help of this religion, the Ahuric, Zoroastrian ... and set it in the place of honour" (*Yt.* 13.99-100).

The conversion of Vīštāspa is traditionally said to have taken place in Zoroaster's forty-second year (a figure undoubtedly reached by later calculation). Thereafter the prophet evidently saw his doctrines accepted and spreading steadily, while he himself lived in honour in his new home,

[30] See Lommel, "Zarathustras Priesterlohn", *Studia Indologica, Festschrift f. W. Kirfel*, Bonn 1955, 187-95 (repr. in *Zarathustra*, ed. Schlerath, 199-207).

[31] Thieme, *Studien zur idg. Wortkunde*, 75 n. 1 (with a new translation of the verse).

[32] See Thieme, *KZ* LXIX, 1951, 176 f.

[33] The meaning and form of *nəmōi* ("to flee"?) are both doubtful. See most recently, with a different translation, Humbach, *Die Gathas* I, 128, II, 66-7.

[34] On this verse see Benveniste, *JA* 1932, 125-6.

[35] That Hutaosā was the first to listen to Zoroaster's teachings (see Jackson, *Zoroaster*, 68) is based on this verse (the last part of which is an adaptation of the Gathic *Y.* 49.7). In the late *Zardušt Nāma* she is represented as accepting the faith under her husband's influence.

[36] Vīštāspa's name possibly means "he who has trained horses", see Bailey, *JRAS* 1953, 101-3.

God's prophet among men. For an Iranian priest marriage is a professional qualification;[37] and according to tradition Zoroaster married thrice. His first wife, whose name is not recorded, bore him a son, Isat.vāstra, "Desiring pasture",[38] and three daughters, of whom the youngest was called Pouručistā "Very thoughtful".[39] Her marriage is celebrated in *Y.* 53. By his second wife, who is also nameless, he had two sons, Urvatat.nara, "Commanding men", and Hvarə.čithra, "Sun-faced".[40] His third wife, Hvōvī, did not, it seems, bear him any children. She belonged to the powerful family of the Hvōgva ("Possessing good cattle"), and among her kinsmen was Jāmāspa, who is warmly spoken of in the *Gāthās*, together with Frašaoštra of the same house.[41] According to tradition, Frašaoštra was Hvōvī's father, and Jāmāspa, remembered as Vīštāspa's minister and wise counsellor, was the man to whom Zoroaster gave his own daughter Pouručistā in marriage, the two families becoming thus doubly related.

According to the tradition, Zoroaster lived to be old, in precise figures (of doubtful worth) until he was 77 years and 40 days. Accepting his teachings involved Kavi Vīštāspa in battles with neighbouring princes, who seem bitterly to have resented the establishment of a new faith in their midst. Their names appear in various passages in the *yašts*, notably in *Yt.* 5.109, where Vīštāspa is represented as asking this boon: "That I may crush Tąthryavant of bad religion, the *daēva*-worshipper Pəšana, and the wicked Arəjat.aspa". In these struggles he was valiantly supported by his brother Zairivairi (Pahlavi Zarēr), who overcame the *daēva*-worshipper Humayaka (*Yt.* 5.113); by Zairivairi's son Bastavairi (*Yt.* 13.103), and by Jāmāspa Hvōgva (*Yt.* 5.68-9), who was evidently as brave as he was wise. The chief hero of these wars in the religious tradition is, however, Vīštāspa's own son, the "just and valiant Spəntōdhāta" (*Yt.* 13.103), the Isfandiyār of Persian epic. The survival of Zoroastrianism is proof of the tradition that these early battles were fought triumphantly by the upholders of the new faith.

The account of the early days of Zoroastrianism thus furnished by the *Gāthās*, in conjunction with the *yašts* and the Pahlavi books, although

[37] A number of the higher rituals may only be performed by a married priest, one who is fulfilling his allotted role, as a mature man, in the scheme of things.

[38] See *Yt.* 13.98, and cf. *GBd.* XXXV. 56 (BTA 301), *Ind. Bd.* XXXII.5 (transl. West, *SBE* V, 142).

[39] See *Yt.* 13.139 (where the names of her sisters are also given).

[40] See *Yt.* 13.98 and *GBd.* XXXV.56; and on the meanings of the names Bartholomae, *Air. Wb.* 1536, 1849.

[41] See *Y.* 51. 17-18 and cf. 46. 16-17; 49. 8-9; 28.8. Frašaoštra probably means "having strong camels", see Bailey, *TPS* 1953, 25. The name Jāmāspa has "horse" for its second element.

meagre and lacking in detail, appears wholly probable in the light of the general history of religions: Zoroaster, a man of faith, had his searchings after truth confirmed by a revelation, and felt divinely called to preach a new doctrine. He met with hostility from those who already knew him, left his own country, and found his message more readily received by strangers. Once a ruler had been converted to the new faith it flourished and became firmly established. Casual details provided by the sources (of proper names, personal relationships and isolated events) give this account, fragmentary though it is, an impressive reality.

The problem is to assign this relation of events, in itself harmonious and acceptable, to a time and place. As for the place, the most important single testimony is the language of the Avesta. Within the family of Iranian languages this belongs "between the Western Iranian dialects as spoken in present-day Persia, and the Eastern dialects on the Indian frontier and to the North of the River Oxus";[42] and although the material for comparison is scanty, it can at least be said that this ancient tongue has features in common with that recorded in Khwarezmia from the second century A.C.[43] There is nothing, however, to establish exactly where the people who used it lived in Zoroaster's own lifetime. Moreover, "Younger" Avestan, in which most of the Zoroastrian holy works are composed, differs from the "Gathic" Avestan which the prophet spoke not only as representing various later stages of the language, but also through small dialect differences here and there.[44] On the linguistic evidence alone, therefore, the place where Zoroaster was born, and the "land" to which he went, can only be assigned somewhat vaguely to the north-east.

The geographical data are unhelpful, partly because of their paucity (there are none in the *Gāthās* themselves), partly because of a natural tendency of the Iranians, like any other migrant people, to carry familiar names along with them and give them to new mountains and rivers, lakes and valleys where they settled. A further complication was later added through the pious inclination of followers of the prophet to identify places in his story with ones in their own familiar countrysides. This process probably began early, so that one finds legendary events attached of old to particular places in, for instance, Seistan, far to the south-east,[45] as in

[42] Henning, "The disintegration of the Avestic studies", *TPS* 1942, 51.

[43] See Henning, *Zoroaster*, 44-5. For a bibliography of Khwarezmian studies up till 1968 see D. N. MacKenzie, in *Current Trends in Linguistics*, V, ed. T. Sebeok, The Hague 1969, 455.

[44] See A. Meillet, *JA* 1917, 183 ff.; K. Hoffman in this *Handbuch*, I.iv.i., p. 6.

[45] See above, pp. 101-02, and below, Ch. 10.

historical times they came to be associated by the Medean Magi with places in Azarbaijan in the north-west.

As for the time at which Zoroaster lived, since both the known dates —the 6000 years before Plato of the Greeks, and the 258 years before Alexander of the Sasanian priests[46]—have been shown to be artificially calculated on erroneous bases, it has to be accepted that no reliable tradition existed about this. This is not surprising, since the Iranians of old had clearly little interest in history, and no means of establishing an absolute chronology for any events. Once again, therefore, one is left with such evidence as the Avesta itself provides. Linguistically the *Gāthās* appear very old, comparable indeed in antiquity with the *Rigveda*, whose compilation, it is thought, may have begun somewhere around 1700 B.C.[47] The world-picture which underlies Zoroaster's theology is correspondingly archaic; and his imagery, as we have seen, is drawn from the ancient pastoral tradition of his people, which was gradually modified as they became settled. In the absence of any sound external evidence, therefore, it seems natural to conclude that the prophet lived sometime between, say, 1400 and 1000 B.C., at a time when his people were perhaps still dwelling in northern Central Asia, before moving south in their turn to fix their abode in Khwarezm.

This conclusion, vague though it necessarily is, receives support from the testimony of the "Younger" Avesta, of which even the oldest parts appear linguistically considerably later than the *Gāthās*.[48] This contains only one doubtful allusion to a place in Western Iran.[49] Otherwise it belongs wholly to the north-east and east. It is not at all homogeneous, and many generations evidently contributed to its composition, during whose lives the language steadily evolved from its ancient "Gathic" stage. One of the oldest texts, the *Farvardīn Yašt*, contains references to Iranian peoples whose names are wholly unknown from the records of the Greeks and Achaemenians, which provide some knowledge of Eastern Iran from the 6th and 5th centuries B.C. There are also allusions in this *Yašt* to place-names which are similarly lost to history. Another text (later both linguistically and evidently in content), namely the first chapter of the *Vendidād*, contains a list of seventeen other regional names, most of which

[46] See below, p. 286 n. 38 and in Vol. II.
[47] See above, p. 3.
[48] A recent calculation sets the composition of what appears to be an ancient part of the *Farvardīn Yašt* at 200 years at least after the *Gāthās*, see T. Burrow, *JRAS* 1973, 139. See further in Ch. 10.
[49] I.e. Ragha, on which see Gershevitch, *JNES* XXIII, 1964, 36-7, and further in Vol. II.

can be identified with known areas in North-eastern and Eastern Iran.[50] None of these names occurs in the *Farvardīn Yašt*, and the two texts seem in this respect to span a long period, during which the faith with its scriptures evolved among the Eastern Iranian peoples before finding a hearing among their cousins to the west. Had it been otherwise, and had Zoroastrianism been carried in its infancy to the Medes and Persians, these imperial peoples must inevitably have found mention in its religious works. It seems likely that Zoroaster's teachings reached the Medes as early as the 7th century B.C., together with a canon of religious works already so venerable that no obvious western imprint was ever thereafter made on them, even when further material came to be added. The prophet himself must therefore have flourished centuries earlier, and this accords with the fact that the Greeks in the 6th century learnt of him from the Persians as a figure belonging to immense, remote antiquity.

Assigning Zoroaster's life to a period in distant prehistory helps to explain how it is that many details of it have been lost, so that only salient facts—together with the precise bits of information imbedded in the *Gāthās*—survive in the religious tradition. Virtually nothing is known of the years which he spent in dignity and honour at Vīštāspa's court, but in the end, it is said, he died in venerable age, struck down by an assassin's hand. The Pahlavi books record that his slayer belonged to the Tūiryas, an Iranian people who figure repeatedly in the *yašts*;[51] and that he was a *karapan*, presumably, that is, a priest of the old religion. Even his name is given, as Brādrēs or the like (the exact form cannot be determined from the Pahlavi).[52] That in the end a fanatic should have slain the prophet seems wholly credible in the light of the fierce religious controversies and holy wars depicted in the Avesta; and before we press on to glean what can be learnt of the early history of the faith, we must first address ourselves to the major task of elucidating Zoroaster's own teachings and seeking to discover what was so new and challenging in them that they should have awakened either self-sacrificing devotion or deadly hate, so that Zoroastrianism received, like nascent Christianity and Islam, an early baptism of blood.

[50] See Ch. 10, below.
[51] See above, pp. 104-05, 107.
[52] For the relevant texts see Jackson, *Zoroaster*, Ch. 10 (pp. 124-32); and add *Pahl. Riv. Dd.* XXXVI.6 (Dhabhar, 113). XLVII.23 (ibid., 141).

CHAPTER EIGHT

AHURA MAZDĀ, ANGRA MAINYU AND THE BOUNTEOUS IMMORTALS

All the indications suggest considerable intellectual activity in the priestly schools of the "Avestan" people before Zoroaster was born; and this activity appears to have led to sober philosophical concepts, by which it was sought to establish a primeval simplicity and unity behind the diversity of physical phenomena. Thus it was postulated that at the beginning of the world there had been only one plant, one animal, one man; and that from these unique prototypes had come the vast variety of present being. There was also, one may reasonably deduce, vigorous discussion in matters of ethics and worship, for controversy about the cults of *daēva* and *ahura* is not likely to have originated with Zoroaster. Probably during his years of training as a priest, and his time of wandering thereafter, the prophet studied and disputed with more than one master and pursued more than one course of intellectual and spiritual inquiry. What is certain is that he must also have spent many hours in lonely meditation, before his ponderings led him both to newly formulated doctrines and to the illumination of his vision at the river's bank, which gave his intellectual conclusions the force of revealed truth, and filled him with the sense of mission necessary for their promulgation.

The core of Zoroaster's new teachings appears to have been his apprehension of primeval unity in the sphere of the divine also, a counterpart to the primeval unity already held to have existed for physical things. In the beginning, he taught, there was only one good God, only one divine being worthy to be worshipped, a *yazata*, namely Ahura Mazdā, the Lord Wisdom. At first all divine goodness was comprehended within his person, and plurality and diversity came about only because of the existence also of evil divinity—for together with Ahura Mazdā in the beginning, and likewise uncreated, was another being who was opposed to him, the Hostile Spirit, Angra Mainyu.[1] These two Zoroaster saw with prophetic eye at their original encountering: "Now these two spirits, which are twins, revealed themselves at first in a vision. Their two ways of thinking,

[1] The expression Angra Mainyu occurs once in the *Gāthās* (*Y.* 45.2). It is commonly used in the rest of the Avesta in its later dialect form of Aŋra Mainyu, which yields the familiar Middle Iranian Ahriman.

speaking and acting were the better and the bad.—Between these two (ways) the wise choose rightly, fools not so.—And then when these two spirits first met, they created both life and not-life, and that there should be at the last the worst existence for the followers of the Drug, but, for the followers of Aša, the best dwelling. Of the two spirits, the one who follows the Drug chose doing the worst things, the Most Bounteous Spirit who is clad in the hardest stones chose *aša*, and (so do) they who will willingly come with true actions to meet Ahura Mazdā" (*Y.* 30.3-5).[2]

The "Most Bounteous Spirit", Spəništa Mainyu, who chose *aša*, is evidently Ahura Mazdā himself, "clad in the hardest stones", that is, the crystal sky; and the "two spirits" are duly explained by the Pahlavi commentator on these verses as "Ohrmazd and Ahriman".[3] This and the commoner expression, "Bounteous Spirit", Spənta Mainyu, are used, however, in complex fashion elsewhere in the *Gāthās*; for sometimes they seem to represent the power in Ahura Mazdā himself through which he thinks or perceives or acts,[4] at others an independent divinity who hypostatizes this power. The former appears to be the dominant concept, to judge from both the *Gāthās* and the tradition, which usually identifies Ahura Mazdā with his "Bounteous Spirit".[5] Later the Zurvanites, a heterodox Zoroastrian group, came to interpret literally the words "these two spirits which are twins" as meaning that the two great opposed beings were actually twins in the sense of having been born together from one womb; and they postulated accordingly a father for them, namely Zurvān or Time. This doctrine was rejected by orthodox Zoroastrians as flat heresy, demon-inspired;[6] but a number of European scholars have followed the Zurvanites in taking the expression "twins" literally, and have attempted to justify this by supposing that the "Most Bounteous Spirit" of *Y.* 30 is to be identified with Spənta Mainyu as a separate divinity, Ahura Mazdā being the "father" of both Bounteous and Hostile Spirits. This "childbirth" (it has been suggested) "consisted in the emanation by God of undifferentiated 'spirit', which only at the emergence of free will split

[2] The translation given above follows the Danish rendering by Kaj Barr, "Principia Zarathustriaca", *Øst og Vest, Afhandlinger tilegnede A. Christensen*, Copenhagen 1945, 134. On v. 3 see also Gershevitch, *JNES* XXIII, 1964, 32-3. On v. 4 see Gershevitch, ibid., 13, and differently Humbach, *Die Gathas* I, 84.

[3] See Darmesteter, *ZA* I, 220 n. 9.

[4] *Y.* 33.12; 43.2; 44.7; 51.7. On this usage see A. Meillet, *Trois conférences sur les Gāthā de l'Avesta*, Paris 1925, 59; Lommel, *Rel.*, 17-21.

[5] For some Pahlavi passages identifying Ohrmazd with "Spannāg Mēnōg" (the Middle Persian rendering of Spənta Mainyu), see L. Casartelli, *The philosophy of the Mazdayasnian religion under the Sassanids*, transl. by F. J. Jamasp Asa, Bombay 1889, 18-19.

[6] *Dīnkard* IX.30.4 ff., ed. Sanjana, Vol. XVII, 85 f., Madan, II 828 f. See Darmesteter, *ZA* I, 221 n. 10, and in detail H. H. Schaeder, *Iranische Beiträge* I, 288-91.

into two 'twin' Spirits of opposite allegiance".[7] But however one may refine upon the interpretation, it remains doctrinally utterly alien to the *Gāthās* and to the whole orthodox Zoroastrian tradition that evil should in any way originate from Ahura Mazdā; and Lommel was evidently right to reject the hypothesis as "a misunderstanding arising from a rationalistic, lifeless interpretation of the word (twin)."[8] This term was clearly chosen by the prophet as a metaphor to express the equality in state of the two unrelated beings, and their coevity. By using it he emphasized, with characteristic concentration and force, that (despite their total opposition) they were peers at the moment when they made their fateful choice.

This choice, whereby each of them according to his nature laid hold upon an external principle of good or evil, changed the opposition between them to an active one, which expressed itself in creation and counter-creation, or the making of "life and not-life" as the prophet expressed it. According to the tradition Ahura Mazdā's first creative act was to bring into being other lesser benign divinities to aid him, who were likewise worthy of worship, *yazata*: "Ohrmazd first created the lordship of the *yazatas* (*yazdān khwadāyīh*)"[9]. Among them he evoked first of all seven great ones, who in the tradition are especially known as the seven Bounteous Immortals, the Aməša Spəntas: "First he created the Bounteous Immortals who (are) the seven origins (*bun*); and then the rest."[10] There are diverse ways of indicating how Ahura Mazdā gave the lesser *yazatas* their separate existence. In the *Gāthās* Zoroaster speaks of him as being the "father" of individual Aməša Spəntas,[11] and this expression recurs in the Younger Avesta, where he is likewise called their "ruler" and "creator".[12] They are reverenced also as forms with which he "mingles himself";[13] and this verb (*raēthwaya-*) seems chosen to convey the essential unity of all beneficent divine being. In a Pahlavi text this is expressed

[7] Gershevitch, *art. cit.*, 13.

[8] See his *Rel.*, 27-8. Similarly Schaeder, op. cit., 290; Moulton, *EZ*, 133; Söderblom, *The Living God*, 215; Corbin, *Eranos-Jahrbuch* XX, 1951, 163 (who stresses that orthodox Zoroastrianism could tolerate no compromise over "the absolute heterogeneity of Ohrmazd with regard to Ahriman"). Further Bianchi, *Zamān i Ōhrmazd*, Ch. 5. The "Zurvanite" interpretation has, however, been upheld by I. Gershevitch, R. C. Zaehner and others.

[9] *GBd.* I.35 (transl. BTA, 11).

[10] *GBd.* I.53 (transl. BTA, 17): *nazdist Amahraspand dād i haft bun, pas abārig.* Cf. ibid. XXVI.125 (BTA, 233).

[11] For references to the particular passages see Lommel, *Rel.*, 31. This usage, like that of the word "twins" in *Y.*30.4, is plainly metaphorical. See Spiegel, *EA* II, 24.

[12] See *Yt.* 19.16.

[13] *Yt.* 13.81. In general on YAv. passages on the seven Aməša Spəntas see Lommel, loc. cit. Various other *yazatas* are explicitly said in the YAv. to have been created by Ahura Mazdā.

instead by a simile, Ohrmazd's creation of the Bounteous Immortals being compared to the lighting of a torch from a torch.[14] Zoroaster's own words show that he conceived the prime instrument in the act of creation to have been *manah*, thought: "You, O Mazdā, created for us in the beginning by your thought material objects and consciences..." (*Y.* 31.11). The purpose of this creativity was seen as precise and reasoned; and in general Zoroaster's teachings, though filled with passion and moral purpose, have a firm intellectual basis, being logically derived from his first grand premise. Throughout the history of the faith Zoroastrian theologians insisted accordingly on the vital part which reason had in their beliefs—as was most fitting in the worship of Ahura Mazdā, himself the embodiment of all wisdom.

In his *Gāthās* Zoroaster invokes, as well as Ahura Mazdā and the seven Bounteous Immortals, the "other Ahuras"[15] (who can only be Mithra and *Vouruna Apąm Napāt). He also refers by name to a number of the lesser *yazatas*: Sraoša, Aši, Gəuš Tašan, Gəuš Urvan, Tušnāmaiti, Iżā[16]—beings who win mention in his hymns, it seems, because of their close association with the rituals of sacrifice and worship. It is clearly implied in the prophet's words what is stated in the tradition, that all these beings were part of the creation of Ahura Mazdā, brought into being to help him oppose the forces of evil and owing him utter loyalty and obedience. This is the monotheism of Iran, preached by Zoroaster and maintained in the face of all adversity by his followers down to the 19th century A.C.:[17] that *in the beginning* Ahura Mazdā alone existed as a being worthy of worship, the solitary *yazata*, wholly wise, just and good. He is the only uncreated God, and is himself the first cause of all else that is good, whether divine or earthly, sentient or insentient—for after bringing into being his divine helpers he proceeded, through them, to fashion the world and all that is good in it, as a further means of confounding evil and bringing it in the end to nothingness.[18] Zoroaster sees him as "the creator of life", *dātar-*

[14] *Ayādgār i Jāmāspīg* (ed. G. Messina, Rome 1939) III.3-7.

[15] *Y.* 30.9, 31.4, in a *dvandva* compound: *mazdā ahurāŋhō* "Mazdā (and the other) Ahuras". On its grammatical interpretation see Bartholomae, *Air Wb.* 293. The expression has given great trouble to those scholars who have held that Zoroaster himself believed in one *yazata* only, namely Ahura Mazdā. See further below, p. 225.

[16] For references see Bartholomae, *Air. Wb.*, under these various names.

[17] It was only then that the double effects of Christian missionary activity and a dominant European culture began to undermine the traditional beliefs of Western-educated Parsis. See in detail in Vol. IV.

[18] The fact that this was seen by Zoroaster as the purpose of creation led Gershevitch (*JNES* XXIII, 13) to translate the *hōm* .. *ǰasaētəm* of *Y.* 30.4 as an injunctive rather than a preterite, rendering the words accordingly: "In order that they might meet (in battle) the two Spirits first created life and not-life ..".

aŋhāuš (*Y.* 50.11), and his constant epithet throughout Zoroastrian literature and invocation is Dādvah or Dādār, "Creator". It was he who, according to Zoroaster's vision, "as primal being thus thought to himself: "Let the blissful places be filled with light";[19] he who "established the path of the sun and the stars",[20] who "set firmly both the earth from below and the sky, (to keep them) from falling",[21] who "yoked swiftness to the wind and clouds",[22] who "created both light and darkness ... both sleeping and waking ... by whom (were made) dawn, noon and night", who was in fact "Creator of all things through (his) Bounteous Spirit" (*spəntā mainyū vīspanąm dātar-*).[23] Since his creation included all beneficent lesser divinities, they, the *yazatas* of Zoroastrianism, cannot properly be called "gods", for this word suggests the independent divine beings of a pagan pantheon—and it is a striking fact that the old Iranian term for "god", *baga*, is rarely used in the Avesta.[24] On the other hand, the origin of most of the *yazatas* as pagan divinities, and their position still as beings worthy of worship in their own right, makes them more than the angels with which other monotheisms have bridged the gulf between man and the Deity.[25] In general it is probably best, therefore, to leave the Zoroastrian word *yazata* untranslated, to represent a concept unique to this great faith.

A term used generally in Zoroastrianism to describe Ahura Mazdā and all his creation is *spənta*, an adjective which appears to mean "possessing power", the noun *spanah* denoting "supernatural power".[26] When applied

[19] *Y.* 31.7.
[20] *Y.* 44.3.
[21] *Y.* 44.4.
[22] Ibid.
[23] *Y.* 44.7. On the possible dependence on this verse of II Isaiah 44-5 see Morton Smith, "II Isaiah and the Persians", *JAOS* LXXXIII-IV, 1963, 415-21; D. Winston, *History of Religions* V, 1966, 188-9. It seems probable that when Zoroaster attributed to Ahura Mazdā the creation of dawn, noon and night he spoke as a poet rather than a theologian, using (as oral poets especially are apt to do) a fixed grouping of words. The Zoroastrian doctrine of creation (see the following chapter) is that the world fashioned by Ahura Mazdā knew no alteration of day and night, but that time stood always at noon until Angra Mainyu attacked, bringing darkness as well as death.
[24] For the handful of occurrences see Bartholomae, *Air. Wb.* 921. In the *Mihr Yašt*, which preserves so many archaic usages, Mithra himself is said to be "of greatest insight among the gods" *baghanąm .. aš.khrathwastəmō* (*Yt.* 10.141); but in the later tradition of Persia he is never referred to as *Mihr-bay, but always as Mihr-yazad (modern Mihrīzed). On these usages see further Henning, *JRAS* 1944, 134-5; *BSOAS* XXVIII, 1965, 250. In the Parthian and Middle Persian versions of the Manichaean scriptures it is Ohrmazd himself who is regularly given the title *bag* or *bay*, deriving from *baga*. This perhaps represents Zoroastrian usage of Western Iran with regard to the supreme God.
[25] See Casartelli, *Philosophy*, transl. F. J. Jamasp Asa, 69; Lommel, *Zarathustra*, ed. Schlerath, 256.
[26] See Bailey, *BSOS* VII, 1934, 288-92; Nyberg, *Rel.*, 92-5: Schaeder, *ZDMG* XCIV, 1940, 401 n. 9, 408. Lommel, proceeding from the accepted identification of Av. *spənta* with

to the *yazatas* it meant "having power to aid", hence "furthering, supporting, benefiting". Naturally through constant religious use the word acquired overtones of meaning, and various translations have accordingly been proposed, including the word "holy", which with its own development of meaning from "mighty, strong" to "sacred", provides what is in some ways an ideal rendering. The commonest usages are, however, "bounteous" or "beneficent", these terms being preferred in order to avoid confusion with the rather different concepts of Christianity. The adjective *spənta* is applied to the whole of the good creation, material and physical, and ancient usage may lie behind this. The fixed use of this attribute with the noun *aməša* "undying being, immortal" (Ved. *amṛta*) appears, however, to be a purely Zoroastrian development[27] (although not attested in the *Gāthās* themselves, where no collective term occurs). As well as being used for the seven great *yazatas* first created by Ahura Mazdā,[28] the expression Aməša Spənta is applied generally in the tradition to all the divinities brought into being by him, who were effective and beneficent in contrast to the false gods, the *daēvas*, who, Zoroaster taught, were destructive and hostile to his creation. Presumably before Zoroaster preached, dividing good from evil with the firmest of barriers, the Iranians had prudently invoked "All the Immortals", *Vispe Aməša, as their Vedic cousins continued to invoke the Viśve Amṛtas,[29] and so the Zoroastrian expression marked a sharp rejection of pagan usage and doctrine.

The adjective *spənta* is frequently used by Zoroaster of Ahura Mazdā himself,[30] as well as its superlative, *spəništa* "most bounteous" (*Y.* 30.5). The prophet's attitude to the great Creator was one compounded of awe, devotion and trust. He knew him as a person, for he had seen him not only in his original vision, but also in other subsequent moments of revelation, when he both apprehended the Lord in the here and now, and saw him with prophetic eye in the dark backward and abysm of time: "Then I recognized you as bounteous (*spənta-*), Mazdā Ahura, when I saw you as primal at the birth of life" (*Y.* 43.5); "Then I recognized you, Mazdā, in (my) thought as being the beginning and the end ... when I

Balto-Slavonic *šventas* (suggested originally by Bopp) argued nevertheless for a meaning of "understanding, wise" *(verständig)*, see his posthumous *Die Gathas des Zarathustra*, ed. B. Schlerath, Basel/Stuttgart, 1971, 16-17. J. Gonda, *Oriens* II, 1949, 195-203, sought to maintain as well a link suggested independently by W. Caland and by Geiger (*Aməša Spəntas*, Ch. I) with Vedic *pan-*, which he analyses as meaning originally "strengthen, invigorate", and only secondarily, in religious usage, "praise".
[27] See P. Thieme, *Studien zur indg. Wortkunde*, 25 n. 1.
[28] Their number varies between six and seven according to whether Spənta Mainyu is reckoned among them or is identified with Ahura Mazdā himself.
[29] See Thieme, loc. cit.
[30] *Y.* 43.4, 5; 44.2; 46.9; 51.16.

comprehended you with my eye as the real Creator of order (*aša-*), as Lord among the deeds of life" (*Y.* 31.8). Yet for all the grandeur of Zoroaster's new vision, it is recognizably an Ahura of old, the great Lord Wisdom, who thus revealed himself to him as supreme God. Mazdā inhabits, in Paradise, the "sun-beholding dominion (*khšathra-*)" (*Y.* 43.16), the "house of song" (*Y.* 45.8). Here is the "throne of the mightiest Ahura" (*Y.* 28.5), from which he watches "with flashing eye" over the sins of men (*Y.* 31.13); and the righteous, the *ašavans*, can find the paths to his dwelling there (*Y.* 43.3, cf. 33.5). That these beliefs and expressions have Indo-Iranian roots is shown by the Vedas, from which one learns that the righteous, the *ṛtavans*, will make their way to the sunlit, song-filled kingdom (*kṣatra-*) of Paradise, ruled over for them by the lesser Asura, Varuṇa. When the Lord Wisdom revealed himself to Zoroaster, it is evident, moreover, from random phrases that the prophet apprehended him, as was only natural, in human form: "This, Mazdā, with the tongue of your mouth tell us for the knowing" (*Y.* 31.3, cf. 28.11); "by the hand with which you hold those rewards..." (*Y.* 43.4). The anthropomorphic concept of Ahura Mazdā is stated explicitly in the tradition:[31] "It is revealed by a passage of the Avesta that Zoroaster ... spoke to Ohrmazd saying ... 'your head and hands and feet and hair and face and tongue are visible to me even as are my own, and you have such clothes as men have. Give me your hand, so that I may take hold of your hand'. Ohrmazd said: 'I am intangible spirit (*mēnōg ī agriftār*); it is not possible to take hold of my hand.'" One of the Avestan epithets which is unique to Ahura Mazdā is *hukərəptəma* "of fairest form".[32] This anthropomorphism by no means restricts the grandeur of the supreme Lord, who wears the crystal sky as his garment (*Y.* 30.5), and it is in many respects close to the anthropomorphic concepts of Jehovah and Allah. To state, however (as is often done), that Zoroaster apprehended the Creator as disembodied, invisible Spirit is to import alien and anachronistic ideas into the *Gāthās*, and to ignore the evidence of the prophet's own words.

In the light of Vedic evidence about the *asuras* it can be safely assumed that even before Zoroaster became his prophet the Lord Mazdā was a moral deity; and in Zoroaster's teaching the conflict between him and his adversary, Angra Mainyu, was wholly a struggle between the right, *aša*, and the false, *drug*. Behind this ethical dualism (which itself had evidently some pagan roots) there lay also, as we have seen, an Indo-Iranian tradi-

[31] *Šāyest nē-šāyest* XV.1-2 (ed. Kotwal, 56).
[32] *Y.* 1.1, 26.2. See Darmesteter, *ZA* I, 7 n. 4, Bartholomae, *Air. Wb.* 1818.

tion of theistic dualism,[33] of an opposition between the gods of the bright sky, with life and happiness in their gift, and the lord of the dark kingdom of the dead beneath the earth.[34] For Zoroaster this subterranean realm appeared as hell, a place where sinners went to suffer punishment; and it seems possible, therefore, that it was its ruler, who even in pagan times was regarded as claiming those unworthy of heaven, who suggested to him the concept of the "Hostile Spirit", so that he saw "Ohrmazd in the height and Ahriman in the depth."[35] In the absence of evidence this must remain conjecture; but such a hypothesis would help to explain why in Zoroastrian tradition Angra Mainyu is seen both as actively malignant, a militant foe, and also as a mere shadow, a negation of good; for traditionally existence in the kingdom of the dead was characterised by a lack of substance, by a spectral quality without positive capacities, a nothingness.[36] It was this existence which the Vedic Indians considered as truly "death";[37] and such a belief may lend significance to Zoroaster's statement that "when these two spirits first met, they created both life and not-life" (*Y.* 30.4), immortality in Paradise and "death" beneath the earth.

In the pagan religion, to judge from the Vedas, *aša* was conceived as an impersonal force whose action was for the benefit of the world; but for Zoroaster there existed both the principle *aša* and Aša who was a divinity, one of the seven Bounteous Immortals of his own great vision. In the *Gāthās* (as in the partly pagan *Yasna Haptaŋhāiti*) the principle *aša* has a dominant role. The righteous man is still described as *ašavan*, "possessing *aša*", and each person is urged to surpass the other in *aša* (*Y.* 53.5). The divinity Aša is, moreover, the most often named of the Aməša Spəntas, by the prophet himself and in the Younger Avesta. Zoroaster prays that Ahura Mazdā will show him Aša, and Ahura Mazdā commands him to go to Aša to learn (*Y.* 43.10-12), for Ahura Mazdā is of the same mind as Aša (*Y.* 29.7). One thus finds in the Gathic conception of Aša/*aša* the same pattern that we have already met in relation to the "abstract" gods of pagan times: *aša*, "righteousness" or "justice" is a quality which can manifest itself in many ways in daily life; and Aša is a divine being who personifies that quality, and who may be invoked and prayed to for its

[33] See above, pp. 83-4.
[34] Nyberg, *JA* 1931, 119-25, argued for the identity of the primitive chthonic god with Zurvān; but this suggestion can only be entertained if one regards Zurvān himself as an ancient divinity, which seems unlikely (see further in Vol. II). On the possibility that the ancient king of the underworld may have been Yima see above, pp. 92, 117.
[35] *GBd.* XXVIII.12 (BTA, 249).
[36] For Pahlavi material on the negative aspect of Ahriman and his creation see Sh. Shaked, *Acta Orientalia* XXXIII, 1971, 70-4.
[37] See above, p. 115.

possession like any other god.[38] Being just, which we regard as a property of a man's inner self, was apprehended by Zoroaster "as something which guided him, a power which worked upon him. For us it is subjective, but [in ancient Iran] it appeared as something objective, distinct from and —being immaterial—above a man. And since it was experienced as effective, it was something living, hence a personality".[39] Even as a divine being Aša remains neuter, like the common noun. Gender, however, does not always seem of importance in Indo-Iranian concepts of divinity, in which, it has been observed, "the activity of a god, even of an important god, is often more prominent than his person".[40] In the case of Aša and one of the other "neuter" Immortals of the *Gāthās*, Vohu Manah, the personification is emphasised through the description of Ahura Mazdā as the "father of Aša" (*Y.* 44.3; 47.2) and "father of Vohu Manah" (*Y.* 31.8; 45.4);[41] and in the later tradition, where there is loss of grammatical gender, these two and the other "neuter" Gathic Aməša Spənta, Khšathra, all came to be regarded as masculine divinities.

"In the Gāthās Aša is ... set ... in sharpest opposition to the Drug, 'deceit, denial of the divine order and of all that has holy power in itself'. The Rigveda knows a corresponding antithesis between *ṛta* and *druh*, but it is quite different, imprecise and accidental. It cannot be doubted that the whole division of existences according to the dividing line Aša/Drug, by which in the world of men the *ašavan*, "possessor of Aša", stands over against the *drəgvant*, "he who has the Drug's nature", is Zoroaster's own work and is based on the most personal experiences he has had with both deities and men. Zoroaster stands in a battle of life and death. His opponents in the fight, *daēva*-worshippers, deny him and his God, and he brands them as Drug 'deceit'. He himself has seen into Aša's order, and he proclaims it for him who will hear. But he who has heard must choose whether he will fight with thought, word and deed on Aša's side for the life-strengthening powers, or will follow the Drug".[42] In Zoroaster's teaching Ahura Mazdā created Aša,[43] and presumably the Hostile Spirit is similarly held to have brought forth the Drug. Yet in *Y.* 51.10 Zoroaster refers to the "creation of the Drug" (*dāmi- drūjō*), apparently in antithesis to the "world of Aša" (*ašahyā gaēθå*, *Y.* 31.1); and there are traces

[38] Earlier Moulton (*EZ*, 151) was led by this similarity to point out, conversely, that the concept *mithra*/Mithra was "quite in the Gathic spirit".
[39] Lommel in *Zarathustra*, ed. Schlerath, 257 (on the six Bounteous Immortals in general).
[40] Gonda, *Rel. Indiens* I, 28.
[41] See Thieme, *Zarathustra*, ed. Schlerath, 405-6.
[42] Barr, *Øst og Vest*, 134.
[43] *Y.* 31.7, 8; 45.4.

in his thought of what seems to have been the pagan concept of *aša* and *drug* existing independently of the gods, rather than being evoked by them; for the fact that Ahura Mazdā and Angra Mainyu *chose* between good and evil suggests that these principles pre-existed them. The question of the origin of evil is not, however, one to which any philosopher of antiquity furnished a wholly satisfying answer; and as a prophet and moralist Zoroaster was presumably more concerned with the practical consequence of what he had apprehended than with pursuing this problem with full intellectual rigour.

The wickedness of the false gods, the *daēvas*, like that of Angra Mainyu, also appears from one passage to be attributed to wrong choice; for in *Y.* 30.6 it is said: "The *daēvas* chose not rightly, because blindness came upon them as they consulted, so that they chose the worst purpose. Then together they betook themselves to Wrath (Aēšma), through whom they sickened the life of men." In another verse, however, *Y.* 32.3, the *daēvas* are said to be "of the race (*čithra-*) of evil purpose", which suggests that Zoroaster thought of them also as being "begotten" or created by Angra Mainyu, as the Bounteous Immortals were "begotten" or created by Ahura Mazdā. (That Ahriman "miscreated" the *dēvs* is explicitly stated in the tradition.[44]) Zoroaster nowhere names any of the *daēvas*, and it is only from the Pahlavi books that one learns that there were numbered among them great Indar, Nāŋhaithya and Sāvol (Vedic Indra, Nāsatya and Śarva).[45] The prophet's stern inditement that their intent was evil and that they consorted with Wrath accords with Vedic descriptions of the swashbuckling, amoral Indra, and suggests that Zoroaster damned these gods as false, not to be worshipped, because in his eyes they stood for might instead of right, and lured their worshippers (perhaps through their greed for offerings) into destructive feuding and violence.

Even as Ahura Mazdā acted through the *yazatas* to create and sustain this *spənta* world, so, it seems, Angra Mainyu used the *daēvas* to shape his counter-creation, which the prophet calls "not-life", *ajyāti-*. This word occurs only in *Y.* 30.4, in opposition to *gaya-* "life", and may well have been coined by Zoroaster to express his own concept of the wicked creation. He is not more explicit; but the tradition tells that this "not-life" embraces all that is evil, morally or physically (from man's point of view), evil being for Zoroaster something which preys, vampire-like, on the *spənta* creation, rather than existing independently and self-sustained.

In contrast with the corrupting activities of the *daēvas*, the task of the

[44] *GBd.* I.49 (BTA, 15).
[45] On these three *daēvas* see above, pp. 53-5, 83.

Bounteous Immortals is to further the "world of *aša*", so that it does not decay or wither, spoil or become impure. The great seven of Zoroaster's own vision are particularly concerned with this duty, for they are not only the first-created of the *yazatas*, but remain the closest to Ahura Mazdā. Partly because of this closeness, partly because of the occurrence in the *Gāthās* of corresponding common nouns side by side with the *yazatas'* names, partly also because of a widespread conviction that Zoroaster preached a continuing rather than an original monotheism, a number of scholars have interpreted the appearance of these beings in the prophet's own hymns as representing no more than the isolation of different aspects of Ahura Mazdā, which were first venerated as independent divinities by his followers. That this cannot properly be maintained against the evidence of the *Gāthās* themselves has, however, been amply demonstrated by B. Geiger.[46] Among the passages which he cited to show that Zoroaster himself worshipped these great beings as divinities are the following: "You who are the most mighty Ahura Mazdā, and Ārmaiti, and Aša who furthers the world, and Vohu Manah, and Khšathra, hear me, pity me ... [imperative plurals]" (*Y.* 33.11); "For you shall I harness the swiftest steeds ... that you [pl.] may draw near, O Mazdā, Aša, Vohu Manah. May you be ready for my help" (*Y.* 50.7); "Consider my affairs wherein I am active, O Vohu Manah, my worship, O Mazdā ... my words of praise, O Aša. Grant, O Amərətāt and Haurvatāt, your portion with everlastingness" (*Y.* 33.8); "If Aša is to be invoked, and Mazdā (and the other) Ahuras, and Aši and Ārmaiti ..." (*Y.* 31.4); "To you, Ahura, and to Aša, shall we offer sacrifice ..." (*Y.* 34.3); "You [pl.] shall I worship, praising, O Mazdā Ahura, together with Aša and the best Manah, and Khšathra ..." (*Y.* 50.4). In *Y.* 51.20 Zoroaster speaks of Aša, Vohu Manah and Ārmaiti as being of one will with Mazdā—a thought that is preserved in the tradition; and he envisages the Paradise for which men should strive as "the good abode of Vohu Manah, Mazdā and Aša" (*Y.* 30.10), "the pasture of Aša and Vohu Manah" (*Y.* 33.3).[47] That these and other of his utterances mean what they purport to mean, namely that the prophet himself venerated all these beings as individuals, together with Ahura Mazdā, has the unwavering support of the whole Zoroastrian tradition down to the 19th century, as well as that of a minority of Western scholars. With regard to the alternate theory (that to Zoroaster they were merely "aspects" of God) it has been justly said: "The fervour of piety has nothing to do with

[46] See his *Die Aməša Spəntas*, 85 ff., and notably his summary, ibid., 104.
[47] Since these are Gathic passages, a number of different translations inevitably exist for each. For justifications of the renderings given here see Geiger, loc. cit.

such ... subtle distinctions, but addresses itself to divine Beings, whose beauty is felt here as fascinating and whose power is recognized as effective".[48] That attributes of a great god, having been isolated, should then be invoked and worshipped as independent divinities was already a characteristic of the pagan Iranian religion, as we have seen strikingly in the case of the lesser Ahura, Mithra: for around him, the Lord Loyalty, are grouped "Justice", "Judging", "Valour" and "Obedience" (Arštāt, Rašnu, Hąm.varəti, Sraoša); and close though these beings are to him, each has his or her own separate life, and all receive worship and offerings to secure their individual favours.[49] Nor are these divinities less "abstract" than those of Zoroaster's own revelation. Reverence for deities who personified "abstractions" appears a dominant feature of Indo-Iranian worship, as does also the linking of such "abstract" personifications with concrete phenomena—Loyalty with fire and sun, Troth with water. The mould in fact was already old in which Zoroaster cast his new doctrines.

The names of the six Bounteous Immortals of his revelation, together with the epithets which became fixed for them in later tradition (for they are not invariably or even regularly attached to them in the *Gāthās*) are as follows: Vohu Manah "Good Intention" or "Good Thought", Aša Vahišta "Best Righteousness"; Khšathra Vairya "Desirable Dominion" or "Kingdom"; Spənta Ārmaiti "Bounteous Devotion" or "Obedience"; and Haurvatāt and Amərətāt, "Wholeness" or "Health" and "Life".[50] As these six have so vital and particular a part in Zoroastrian doctrine, it is necessary that they should be considered in detail, both singly and together. As a group, which was how Zoroaster beheld them in his great vision at the river-bank, the six Aməša Spəntas form a heptad with the Creator or with his Bounteous Spirit, Spənta Mainyu. With the latter they are seven beings who are "of one mind, of one voice, of one act; whose mind is one, whose voice is one, whose act is one, whose father and ruler is one, the Creator, Ahura Mazdā. Of them one beholds the soul of the other, thinking upon good thoughts, good words, good deeds ... they who are the creators and fashioners and makers and observers and guardians of the creations of Ahura Mazdā" (*Yt.* 19.16-18).[51] The "creations" thus referred to were, as the tradition plainly shows, and as appears incompletely from allusions in the *Gāthās* themselves, the series of six which, with that of pervading fire, make up this world according to the pagan cosmogony—a heptad

[48] H. Corbin, *Eranos-Jahrbuch* XXII, 1953, 101.
[49] See above, p. 59.
[50] On the meaning of *amərətāt* see Thieme, *Studien zur idg. Wortkunde*, 29 ff.
[51] Cf. *Zādspram* XXXV.1 (ed. BTA, 150/cxxiii).

therefore, each of which was assigned to one of the heptad of the Aməša Spəntas, as follows (in order of the creations): the crystal sky, which enclosed the world like a fortress and dominated the earth, belonged to "sun-beholding" Khšathra,[52] Dominion, who thus (since, as we have seen, crystal was classified as a metal) was lord of metals also. Water, upon which all life and well-being ultimately depends, was assigned to Haurvatāt, "Health". Earth, lowly, submissive and fecund, belonged to Ārmaiti, Devotion, who thus formed a pair with dominating Khšathra, lord of the sky. The plants which nourish the animal kingdom were assigned to Amərətāt "Life", who because of the association both of the divine concepts and the physical creations was closely linked always with Haurvatāt. Beneficent animals belonged to Vohu Manah; and man, the last of the six creations, was the especial care of Ahura Mazdā himself, or (as in *Yt.* 19) of his Bounteous Spirit.[53] Finally the creation of fire, which runs through all the others, was allotted to Aša, personification of the order that should pervade the world. The association of the seven Immortals with the seven creations is fully set out in the Pahlavi literature, as in the following passage:[54] "In that material world of mine, I who am Ohrmazd (preside over) the just man, and Vahman over cattle, and Ardvahišt over fire, and Shahrevar over metals, and Spendārmad over earth and virtuous woman, and Hordād over waters and Amurdād over plants. Whoever teaches care for all these seven (creations) does well and satisfies (the divine beings); then his soul will never belong to Ahriman and the *dēvs*. When he has cared for them [i.e. the seven creations] then these seven Amahraspands[55] care for him... (It is) my will and it is needful, the care and satisfaction of these seven Amahraspands... Tell it also to mankind, so that they may not sin and become wicked, and so that Paradise, the light of Ohrmazd, may be theirs."

It is notable that here the order in which the Aməša Spəntas are named does not tally with the chronological order of the creations. This is frequently the case in Pahlavi works, and has evidently two causes: one is the relative ethical importance of individual Aməša Spəntas, which brings it about that Vohu Manah and Aša, who guard the fifth and seventh creations, stand first in dignity among the Immortals, after Spənta Mainyu or Ahura Mazdā himself, and so are often named before the rest. The other is that some of the creations form natural pairs, that is, sky and

[52] *Y.* 43.16 *(khvāng.darəsōi khšathrōi)*.
[53] See the Pahlavi *Sīrōza* I.1 (Dhabhar, *Zand-i Khūrtak Avistāk*, ed. 160.5-6, transl. 307); *GBd.* III.12 (BTA, 39); *Šāyest nē-šāyest* XV.5 (ed. Kotwal, 58).
[54] *Šnš.* XV.5-6, 30 (Kotwal, 58, 67).
[55] A Middle Iranian form of Av. Aməša Spənta.

earth, water and plants; and so one finds their protectors, Khšathra and Ārmaiti, Haurvatāt and Amərətāt, frequently placed together in this way after the first great three. These variations in grouping are one of the factors which have obscured for inquirers the exact correspondence between the seven Aməša Spəntas and the seven creations. A further cause for confusion arose (probably already in the Parthian period) when some learned Zoroastrians sought to harmonise their own doctrine of the seven creations with Greek philosophical ideas about the four elements of fire and water, air and earth, thought to make up the world. Thus in those Pahlavi books which are most influenced by Greek learning the Zoroastrian term for "creation" (*dahišn*) is partly replaced by one adapted to mean "element" (*zahag*).[56] Syriac Christians regularly accused the Zoroastrians of venerating the "elements";[57] and thus the fundamental theological doctrine of the creations, based on ancient Iranian scholastic theory, became confused by contamination with alien concepts.

In what is evidently the genuine Zoroastrian tradition each one of the great beings of the prophet's revelation is represented as "lord" (*ratu*) of his or her creation (Ārmaiti, Haurvatāt and Amərətāt are female, Spənta Mainyu is masculine, and the other three, as we have seen, are represented by neuter nouns); and the relationship between divinity and thing is similar to that between, for example, Mithra and the sun. It is not, that is, part of the fundamental concept of the *yazata*, but is very close—so close that just as the name Mithra (Mihr) can be used for the sun itself, so already in the *Gāthās*, and all through the tradition, the actual names of the Aməša Spəntas can represent their particular creations.[58] Mithra, it appears, became linked with the sun because of its fiery nature;[59] and similarly each of the Aməša Spəntas has an especial connection with the creation he or she protects, a connection which in some instances appears natural and immediately apparent, in others is more subtle, needing pondering to be understood by non-Zoroastrians. Two whose link with their creations seems simple and direct are the constantly associated Haurvatāt and Amərətāt, Lords of the second and fourth creations. One has only to suppose that it is "through the influence of powers hostile to the gods that there arise failure of crops and drought. These in the elemental sphere are the opposites of plants and water. Cattle have no more

[56] See Bailey, *Zor. Problems*, 89.
[57] See further in Vol. II.
[58] This usage is commonest in the tradition in the cases of Spenta Ārmaiti (earth) and Haurvatāt and Amərətāt (water and plants). It is attested also for Vohu Manah (cattle) see *Vd.*19.23-5, Darmesteter, *ZA* II, 267 n. 55, and for Khšathra Vairya (metal) see *Vd.* 9.10.
[59] See above, pp. 29, 34-5.

grazing or drink, men lack milk, which is the basis of all nourishment. Then there comes, before wretchedness and spoliation have reached their worst point, the longed-for rain. With the water life is renewed...plants sprout, health and prosperity return. Here there exists an entirely clear causal connection between ... water and plants and the divinities of Life ... and Health".[60] Further, in the kingdom of God which is to come on earth, which was continually present to Zoroaster's mind as the goal of human striving, will be found health of the body and life everlasting, presided over by these two Amərəša Spəntas. "In your kingdom (*khšathra-*) ... those two which are both yours, Health and Life, (shall be) for sustenance" (*Y.* 34.10,11). The concept of Amərətāt appears of particular significance in this setting, since in pagan idiom "life" used thus meant salvation in Paradise, against "death" or mere existence in the land of shades. One has here, therefore, beliefs which in essence are universally comprehensible, but whose working out is typical of the Indo-Iranian tradition, with the linking of "abstract" and material, this world and the world to come.

With the loss of grammatical gender in Middle Iranian, Haurvatāt and Amərətāt, as Hordād and Amurdād, came to be regarded as masculine beings; but their fellow-divinity Spənta Ārmaiti (Middle Ir. Spendārmad) remained and remains strongly feminine, being linked with Mother Earth, "which bears and endures all".[61] There are a number of characteristically allusive references in the *Gāthās* to the association of Ārmaiti with the earth: "She has given us a goodly home ... For her, through Aša, did Ahura Mazdā cause the plants to grow at the birth of the primeval world" (*Y.* 48.6). She is created "for the care of cattle, if she takes counsel with Vohu Manah" (*Y.* 47.3); and she is adjured: "Through the labour of husbandry let the ox grow fat for our nourishment" (*Y.* 48.5). As the earth Ārmaiti will give up the bones of the dead on the last day (*Y.* 30.7),[62] and in the present she has an especial care for both husbandry and the husbandman.[63] (In later times the annual festival in her honour was called the "farmers' festival".) With regard to this association of Ārmaiti and the earth it has been observed:[64] "To practice submissiveness, especially submissiveness towards God, is indeed the business of every upright man. In the social gradation, however, it has for millennia been so, that obedience and devotion have been looked for especially from the peasantry, who are the most closely bound to the soil". There is thus excellent reason for seeing in Devotion or Obedience the guardian of earth. Whether such a concept existed before Zoroaster's time has been much debated. In a late Indian source (Sāyana's commentary on the Vedas, made in the 14th century A.C.) Skt. Aramati is identified with the earth; but it has been suggested that this was a parallel development in India, which took place independently of the Iranian tradition. Recently, however, evidence has been adduced from Khotanese Saka (which is held to preserve usages from Iranian paganism),[65] which points to the possible existence of an old link between devotion and the earth. For there existed in Saka two expressions: *ysama śśandai*, < *zam* **śuantā* "bounteous earth", which was used for "world"; and *śśandrāmata*, < **śuantā aramatā* "bounteous, devoted", with which, when the Sakas became Buddhists, they rendered the name of Śrī, the Indian goddess of Fortune. On the basis of these usages it has been suggested that pagan Iran may have known a goddess "Bounteous, devoted Earth", who was thus identified through her epithets with the alien Śrī; and that her attribute *aramatā* "devoted" may have provided Zoroaster with inspiration for the Bounteous Immortal Ārmaiti, who kept the old association with Mother Earth.[66]

The submissive Ārmaiti is regularly paired with Khšathra, "Dominion" or "Kingdom"; and presumably Zoroaster saw in the crystal sky, strong, hard, and arching protectively over the earth, a fit representative of lordship in its benevolent relation to lowly obedience. The sky, though so noble a symbol, is, however, remote and untouchable, and it is Khšathra's further association with metals here on earth that brings men into contact with his creation. In the *Gāthās* the only mention of metal concerns the river of molten metal at the end of the world, and in neither of the two passages concerned is a connection with Khšathra made (although there is probably doctrinal significance in this final purification of earth by the fiery substance of the sky).[67] It is in the tradition that Khšathra's lordship

[60] Lommel, *Zarathustra*, ed. Schlerath, 260. For parallels in Indian thought see Thieme, *Studien zur idg. Wortkunde*, 29.

[61] Lommel, loc. cit., 261.

[62] See A. V. W. Jackson apud Moulton, *EZ*, 163-4; and cf. *Vd.* 18.51. This is not incompatible with the rite of exposure of the dead, since the bones of the body are nearly always in the end buried, see above, pp. 110, 113. In the tradition "Spanta Ārmaiti" is also said to yield up at the resurrection those born from the seed duly entrusted to her after *pollutis nocturna*, see *Vd.* 18.46-52.

[63] For some YAv. and Pahlavi passages on the link between Spənta Ārmaiti and earth see Bailey, *Festschrift W. Eilers*, 1967, 139-41.

[64] Lommel, loc. cit., 261.

[65] See S. Konow, *Pavry Memorial Volume*, 220-2; Bailey, *Khotanese Texts* IV, Cambridge 1961, 12.

[66] See above, p. 78. Since women, like peasants, were expected to be devoted and submissive, Spənta Ārmaiti is also the guardian of women (cf. the Pahlavi passage cited above, p. 204), who like farmers celebrate her festival with special devotion.

[67] On this see further in the following chapter.

is expounded in all its fullness, from his care of the "metallic" sky above[68] to his association with this molten stream,[69] and then further with the warrior's armour and weapons (belonging fitly to strong Dominion),[70] and with the beneficent ruler's largesse of gold[71] (which mirrors again the protective role of Khšathra towards Ārmaiti). Although Khšathra's guardianship of the sky is clearly stated, it is his general protection of metals which is usually spoken of, since it is through this that Zoroaster's followers can exercise that stewardship of his creation which is one of their religious duties.[72] The sky had its vital part in the Zoroastrian genesis, but it cannot be either served or wronged by man in his daily life. Thus it is said in a late passage in which are set out man's duties to the seven creations: "Let it be known that no one can take hold of the sky nor can anyone defile it".[73] The sky is the only one of the creations of which this is true; and this explains why Khšathra's lordship over it (rather than over terrestrial metals) is referred to only in learned cosmogonic works and not in ethical writings, which seek to direct behaviour. Since these cosmogonic treatises survive only in Pahlavi versions which were not adequately published before the present century, this caused Khšathra's link with the sky to be overlooked until recently by European scholars.[74] As a result the perfect correspondence of the seven Aməša Spəntas with the seven creations was obscured, and this was yet another factor helping to confuse this central doctrine and to conceal the strong dogmatic framework of Zoroaster's teachings. The effect of these teachings—the unique sense of responsibility felt by his followers, members of one creation, towards the other six—can, however, be clearly traced from ancient to modern times, and is one of the distinctive characteristics of

[68] The metallic nature of the sky is emphatically stated in *GBd.* III.16 (BTA, 43), VI a.2-3 (BTA, 71). All Khšathra's divine helpers are *yazatas* connected with the sky, see below, p. 267.

[69] See *Sirōza* I.4; *Šnš.* XV.18 (ed. Kotwal, 63).

[70] See *GBd.* VI a.2.

[71] *Sirōza* I.4.

[72] This is very clearly stated in *Šnš.* XV (cited above, p. 204).

[73] *Saddar Bundahišn* 75.1 (ed. Dhabhar, 146, transl. Dhabhar, *Rivāyats*, 556).

[74] It was H. W. Bailey's brilliant exposition of *asmān* in *Zor. Problems* Ch. IV which made it possible for the double link of Khšathra with the sky and metals to be at last apprehended, as it was by Zaehner, *The Teachings of the Magi*, London 1956, 32-3. Zaehner did not, however, develop this interpretation in his larger study of Zoroastrianism, *Dawn and twilight..*, where the role of the six Aməša Spəntas is grossly diminished, perhaps because this scholar was then concerned to interpret Zoroastrianism as a forerunner of Christianity, and was intent therefore on stating what seemed common to the two religions, rather than on distinguishing the particular doctrines of the older faith. On the link between the seven Immortals and the seven creations see subsequently Boyce, *BSOAS* XXXIII, 1970, 26 ff.

Zoroastrianism. This has been acknowledged by almost all students of this religion: it is only the theological basis for it which has so long baffled inquiry.[75]

In the *Gāthās* Zoroaster's thoughts about *khšathra* as a thing turn mostly to the "dominion" or "kingdom" of God, which was conceived, it seems, both as heaven itself, thought of as lying just above the visible sky, and as the kingdom of God to come on earth, which is also represented by Khšathra—hence, presumably, his standing epithet of *vairya* "desirable"; for as Christians pray to God, "Thy kingdom come...", so also Zoroastrians long to establish the kingdom of Ahura Mazdā here below.[76] The heavenly aspect of *khšathra*/Khšathra has plainly a pagan origin, for in the Vedas Paradise is the *kṣatra* of Varuṇa, the kingdom of heaven which for their own happiness men longed to attain. In this regard *khšathra* was linked closely with *amərətāt*, the "life" which might be won in the society of the gods above. The concept of Khšathra, like that of his partner Ārmaiti, is thus rich in implications, in layers of accumulated meaning, both pagan and specifically Zoroastrian.

For a Western inquirer the least readily comprehensible of the links between an Immortal and his creation is undoubtedly that between Vohu Manah, Good Intention, and cattle.[77] This is alluded to in several Gathic passages where, characteristically, Zoroaster names the physical creations and then in parallel constructions the divinities that guard them, as, for instance: "O Mazdā, who ... created cattle and waters and plants, give me Haurvatāt and Amərətāt ... through Vohu Manah" (*Y.* 51.7). The "cow"

[75] Before Lommel's demonstration (*Rel.*, 123 ff.) that the Aməša Spəntas were already associated with their creations in the *Gāthās*, it was generally held that the link between divinity and thing was late, part of a postulated corruption of Zoroaster's teachings. It was F. C. Andreas (see apud R. Reitzenstein, *Die hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen*, 3te Aufl., 324 n. 1) who suggested that the development might have taken place under foreign influence, through knowledge of the 5 Chinese elements: fire, water, earth, gold (metal) and wood (plants). He suggested that Ahura Mazdā was first identified as protector of man and Vohu Manah as protector of animals, and that the other five Immortals were then assigned each to one of these Chinese elements. This interpretation was very generally followed; and when it was linked, as commonly, with the idea that the Aməša Spəntas were merely aspects or organs of Ahura Mazdā, rather than divinities, it produced a highly artificial system, with no evident relation to the realities of Zoroastrian faith and worship. For the most recent discussion of this interpretation see Lommel, "Die Elemente im Verhältnis zu den Ameša Spentas", *Festschrift A. E. Jensen*, 1964, 365-77, repr. *Zarathustra*, ed. Schlerath, 377-96.

[76] See Lommel, *Zarathustra*, ed. Schlerath, 264. I. J. S. Taraporewala (*The Divine Songs of Zarathushtra*, Bombay 1951, 347) rejected the translations of "kingdom" or "dominion" as "giving a distinctly Christian colour to ancient Zoroastrian ideas"; but this coloration seems in fact due to Christianity having borrowed certain of those ideas from Zoroastrianism.

[77] On the "cow" in Zoroaster's thought see, with references also to other works on the subject, G. G. Cameron, "Zoroaster the Herdsman", *IIJ* X, 1968, 261-81. Western recognition of the symbolic meaning of the Gathic cow-imagery has brought about a greater harmony with Parsi interpretations than formerly.

is said by the prophet to have chosen for herself "the cattle-tending herdsman as a just lord, as a promoter of Vohu Manah" (*Y.* 31.10). Here one enters a world of unfamiliar thought and imagery, behind which lies evidently the ancient dependence of the Indo-Iranians on their cattle. The cow was to them what the sheep was to the Israelites; and those who come to the *Gāthās* with a Christian background need to transpose the imagery of cattle and herdsman into the more familiar one of sheep and the good shepherd in order to appreciate its religious impact. The Gathic imagery appears even more complex, however, than the Biblical metaphors. To Zoroaster, as to the Vedic poets,[78] the maternal, mild, beneficent cow represented the "good" animal creation upon which man's life depended; and it was also, it seems, a symbol of goodness suffering in this world from evil—as the cattle of Central Asia suffered from marauders, driven from their green pastures along dusty ways to death. As a symbol of what is beneficent (*spənta*) and in accord with *aša* the cow also represents the beneficent and just man, and the herd of cattle the community of the righteous (like the "flock" of Judaeo-Christian tradition). Further, since the same word, *gav*, is used in Avestan for both cow and bull, another strand in the complex cattle-imagery derives from the myth of the Primeval Bull, the first sacrifice and a source of life. There was also the element of the recurrent sacrifice of bull and cow, man's greatest material offering to the gods. In *Y.* 29, which is wholly devoted to the "cow" and cow-symbolism, there is a verse (v.7), in which Zoroaster appears to allude both to this sacrifice, which yielded the oblation to fire, and also to milk from the cow, from which libation was made to the waters—the two offerings which sustain the material world.[79] It was not, plainly, in these devout and regular sacrifices, whereby the creature's spirit and flesh were both consecrated for the general good, that "passion and cruelty" against cattle were thought by Zoroaster to show themselves (*Y.* 29.1), but rather in the laying waste of pastures (*Y.* 32.9), riotous slaughter (*Y.* 32.12) and the driving off of herds—actual happenings of his own time and place, which also symbolise the sufferings of goodness everywhere.[80] The individual man's yearning to possess the "luck-bringing cow" (*Y.* 47.3) or the "cow in calf" (*Y.* 46.19)—types of healthful increase, of the state of

[78] On the metaphorical use in the *RV* of such terms as "cow", "ox" and "pasture" see W. P. Schmid, "Die Kuh auf der Weide", *IF* LXIV, 1958/9, 1-12, with Cameron's general comment, art. cit., 266 n.

[79] That this verse was concerned with the ritual offerings of the *yasna* was stated by Molé, *Culte*, 195; but he followed those who have interpreted *āzūiti* as a libation of butter, according to Vedic ritual, rather than an oblation of fat, as in the only and well attested Iranian rite (see above, pp. 153-4 with n. 40).

[80] On the social implications for Zoroaster's own day see below, p. 252.

being *spənta*—is also therefore to be interpreted as his desire to possess goodness, and so become *ašavan* and enter the kingdom of heaven. Through the development of this image the righteous man in general may be termed a "herdsman" (*vāstrya*). Thus it is asked: "How, in accordance with Aša, shall he, the herdsman, upright in deeds, obtain the cow...?" (*Y.* 51.5). "How, O Mazdā, is he to secure the luck-bringing cow, he who desires it, provided with pasturage, to be his?" (*Y.* 50.2). This image admirably symbolises and summarises the Zoroastrian ethic. The actual *vāstrya* must care for soil and water and plants, for the sake of his animals. He must therefore tend and conserve the good creations of Ārmaiti, Haurvatāt and Amərətāt, as well as that of Vohu Manah himself. He cherishes rather than destroys, and needs patience and self-discipline, putting sloth behind him. He also needs courage to guard his charges against wild beasts and cattle-thieves, keeping them safe in their pastures. He is in fact a "good shepherd" expressed in terms of a different culture, and thus furnishes a metaphor for the moral man. The wicked may correspondingly be termed the "non-herders among the herders" (*fšuyasū afšuyantō*) (*Y.* 49.4, cf. 46.4).

With such complexity inherent in the cattle-imagery, it is not hard to understand why the cow, although not itself capable of choice but only "good" by nature, should nevertheless have appeared to Zoroaster as the symbol of a motion towards goodness, of the good intent which yearns to enter into the tranquillity of the kingdom of heaven. Thus it was, seemingly, that Vohu Manah appeared to him as lord of the creation of cattle; and so the name of this divinity can actually be used to represent cattle, as that of the other Amərša Spəntas can be used to stand for their creations at will.

Nothing is said in the *Gāthās* to identify the divinity who is lord of the sixth creation, man; and this is perhaps because Zoroaster felt himself, inspired as he was, to be filled as he spoke with this being, the Bounteous Spirit of God, Spənta Mainyu—for the tradition shows that it is Ahura Mazdā who, directly or through his Spirit, is regarded as the protector of man, the only one of the six creations who is capable of exercising that power of choice between good and evil which Ahura Mazdā himself had exercised in the beginning.

The seventh creation, fire, pervading the others, is fittingly in charge of Aša, personification of the principle which orders and regulates the world.[81]

[81] Faint traces of a doctrine of vital, cosmic fire can perhaps be discovered also in Indian thought, see Duchesne-Guillemin, "Heraclitus and Iran", *History of Religions* III, 1, Chicago 1963, 43-6. On the differences in the links between Vedic Agni and *ṛta*, and Zoroastrian Ātar and *aša*, see Lommel, *Rel.*, 262-4.

The links between fire and Aša are explicit in the *Gāthās*. Fire itself has there the significant epithet "strong through *aša*" (*ašā.aojah-*, *Y.* 43.4; cf. 34.4, 47.6); and to venerate Aša offerings are made to the fire. This cultic connection appears as an inheritance from the pagan world, even though the personification of Aša seems Zoroaster's own; for it has been said of the Vedic concept of *ṛta*:[82] "*Ṛta* is by no means the law of the material world only, but also of...the liturgical world. The order of the cult is in fact an essential part of the universal order, which is maintained as much through this power as through that of the gods... The fire upon the altar, where the flame is kindled every day ... is ... the womb of *ṛta* (*RV* 10.61.6)". The fire in its container in the *pāvi* or *vedi* represents the greater fire, the sun, whose rising and setting depends on *aša*, and which itself regulates the times and seasons of the world. This link is indicated in *Yasna Haptaŋhāiti*: "The most beautiful form of forms we then devote to you, Mazdā Ahura, these lights here and that highest of the high, that which is called the sun" (*Y.* 36.6).[83] "These lights here" are evidently the scattered fires of earth. These, moreover, had been linked from Indo-Iranian times with the concept of truth, through the part played by fire in ordeals to test veracity. Zoroaster appears therefore to have been developing richly complex pagan ideas when he termed the good creation "the world of *aša*" (*ašahyā gaēθå*, *Y.* 31.1). The Aša whom he himself proclaimed as a divinity is invoked more often in the *Gāthās* even than Vohu Manah, and when these two greatest of the Immortals are named together, it is Aša who most often stands first.[84]

Pagan concepts, of *aša*, of *khšathra* and *ārmaiti*, *haurvatāt* and *amərətāt*, thus appear to have played a part in the conception of five among Zoroaster's great Immortals. Only Spənta Mainyu, the Spirit of God, and Vohu Manah, who led the prophet into God's presence, seem to belong wholly to his new revelation. Spənta Mainyu is by his nature somewhat apart from the rest, as is shown by his virtual absorption in the tradition into the person of Ahura Mazdā himself. In the case of the other six, although Zoroaster evidently conceived them also as *yazatas*, invoked them, prayed to them and made offerings to them, yet at the same time he had ever in mind, as the *Gāthās* show, the things or principles which they personified, and on which his meditations were constantly fixed. There is thus continuous juxtaposition in his verses of divinity and thing, and a

[82] Darmesteter, *Ormazd et Ahriman*, 14.
[83] See recently Gershevitch, *AHM*, 293 (who, however, interprets "these lights here" as daylight rather than fire).
[84] See Lommel, *Rel.*, 47-8.

translator can often only hope to be right when he renders the words concerned as one or the other. The following verses yield examples of such interminglings: "If Aša is to be invoked, and Mazdā (and the other) Ahuras, and Aši and Ārmaiti ... then let me seek by the best purpose (*vahišta- manah-*) that mighty dominion (*khšathra-*)" (*Y.* 31.4). "Ahura Mazdā, uniting himself with Vohu Manah, together with Khšathra, with sun-possessing Aša, answered them: "We make choice of your bounteous, good devotion (*ārmaiti-*), it shall be ours" (*Y.* 32.2); "The man of good will has promised to hold fast to the deeds of this good purpose (*vohu- manah-*) and to bounteous devotion (*spənta- ārmaiti-*), having known her (i.e. Ārmaiti) who is of the Creator, companion of Aša" (*Y.* 34.10).[85] The instant passage of thought from quality to divinity is bewildering to those of another time and culture; and what made the matter initially harder for Europeans was that all early translations of the *Gāthās* were in German, a language which lacks any means of distinguishing in writing between common nouns and proper names (all alike being spelt with initial capital letters). This fact denied the translators any simple means of indicating such transitions of thought, and so encouraged the mistaken assumption that there was uniformity—that one must choose between one or other interpretation, that Aša/*aša*, for instance, must always in the *Gāthās* be either a principle or a *yazata*. Much scholarly debate over this matter appears therefore to be wide of the mark.

There is then the further complexity of the link between the divinities and their creations, which requires a constant mental effort if one is to enter the religious world thus presented. In this connection Lommel has wisely observed:[86] "For us... Good Purpose and the tending of cattle are admittedly two wholly different things. But must it always have been so? Could not at a certain epoch abstract and concrete have appeared to the human spirit as of unified being, the abstract as the inner reality of the concrete? So that, for instance, Pious Devotion and the earth were the spiritual and material aspects of the same thing. A division of this kind in general goes very deep in the Avestan concept of the world, and if this touches on "speculation", I do not know why this word so readily attracts the adjectives "learned, priestly, theological" whereby apparently it is intended to characterise a secondary development—secondary in opposition to the way of thought of a creative time or personality. I do not believe that speculation was solely or even predominantly a matter for theologians as distinct from the creative prophets, who were able to unite

[85] On *dāmi* "of the Creator(?)" see Gershevitch, *AHM*, 168-9.
[86] In *Zarathustra*, ed. Sehlerath, 31-2.

visionary perception with meditative speculation. Or do we consider something which is strange to us, and therefore appears artificial, as speculation, when it is unsought primary intuition?"

To this last question it is naturally impossible to return an answer; but there can be no doubt as to the general proposition that Zoroaster was both a visionary prophet and a meditative thinker. He was also a priest; and, as we have seen, the *Gāthās* show that he continued to pursue this calling while preaching his new message. His verses accordingly are full of allusions to religious rituals and ceremonies, allusions which are occasionally plain, but more often glancing and cryptic, so that they have only slowly been understood.[87] He speaks of addressing Ahura Mazdā in prayer with hands outstretched (*Y.* 28.1), the words flying upward like harnessed steeds to fetch the divine being to his worshipper (*Y.* 50.7). He refers to gifts (*rātā-*) and offerings (*myazda-*) and to the blood sacrifice with the *zaothras* to fire and water. "With the footsteps of Iżā[88] shall I circumambulate you, O Mazdā..." (*Y.* 50.8). "This *mąthra* for fat Ahura Mazdā, of one will with Aša, has created for cattle, and milk for those that crave nourishment [i.e. the waters], the Bounteous One by his decree" (*Y.* 29.7).[89] The former, almost universally held conviction among scholars that Zoroaster was passionately opposed to animal sacrifice arose partly, it seems, from a preconception (that such sacrifices could not form part of a lofty ethical faith), partly from a wilful assumption that the blood offering was never made by his followers. In fact the Younger Avesta, the Sasanian inscriptions and the Pahlavi books are all full of allusions to it,[90] and in

[87] Thus it was possible for scholars of earlier generations to assume that Zoroaster was not in fact a priest, but a member of one of the other two estates; see, e.g., Moulton, *EZ*, 116-8, Hertel, *Die Zeit Zoroasters*, Leipzig 1924, 31 (challenged by Lommel, see *Zarathustra*, ed. Schlerath, 33 ff.). The chief work on the priestly technical terms in the *Gāthās* has been done by H. Humbach (see his *Die Gathas*, passim, with bibliography of his separate articles ibid., I, 10), M. Molé (see his *Culte*, passim, and references to his earlier articles, ibid., xxvii), and P. Thieme (*ZDMG* 107, 1957, 67-104). A summary of their findings is given by K. Rudolph in a survey-article, "Zarathustra—Priester und Prophet", *Numen* VIII, 1961, 81-116, repr. in *Zarathustra*, ed. Schlerath, 270-313. With regard to the ritual all these scholars adopted the common Western premise that the blood sacrifice was alien to Zoroastrianism at every epoch.

[88] Goddess of the sacrifice, see Humbach, *IF* LXIII, 1957, 42-3 and above, p. 164.

[89] See Boyce, *BSOAS* XXXIII, 1970, 32-3.

[90] The significance of this weight of testimony was coming to be acknowledged by Western scholars in the 1960's, see Zaehner, *Dawn*, 1961, 84-7; Duchesne-Guillemin, *La religion*, 1962, 99-102. The facts of animal sacrifice in Zoroastrian rituals had been clearly stated by Parsi scholars long before this, see S. J. Bulsara, *Aēr̥patastān and Nīrangastān*, Bombay 1915 (where the relevant passages are given in the detailed index under "sacrifice"); B. N. Dhabhar, *Rivāyats*, 261 n. 15; J. C. Tavadia, *JBBRAS* 1945, 41. They were also recorded by those European scholars who had contact with the Parsis in the 18th and 19th centuries, namely Anquetil du Perron, Haug and Darmesteter, and by chance travellers in the 17th century.

the "orthodox" Sasanian period willingness on the part of converts to partake of the meat of sacrifice was regarded as proof of their sincerity.[91] The rite was moreover regularly and frequently performed by both branches of the living community down to the last century.[92] But the Parsis had to abandon the greatest of the traditional sacrifices, that of the cow, when they settled in India; and as the centuries passed they came to regard this particular blood offering with as much repugnance as the Hindus themselves. When they established influence over their Irani brethren in the mid-19th century they persuaded them accordingly also to abandon it. But they made no objection then to the Iranis continuing to offer up sheep, goats and fowls, as many Parsis still did themselves at that time. Latterly, however, in the early decades of the present century, the Parsis wholly abandoned the blood sacrifice, and many members of their community came to reject the practice with a vehemence which foreign scholars have transposed into the distant past, reading into every Gathic reference to cruelty to the cow a condemnation of this rite. This is, however, wholly anachronistic. The ancient Iranians, exposed as they were to the bitterly cold winters of the Asian steppes, were meat-eaters, living evidently largely off their herds, as other nomads were to do after them. In Avestan the standard word for food is *pitu* "meat", whereas in later Iranian languages of the settled period this was replaced by *nān* or its equivalents, that is, "bread". That the prophet himself did not question the older practice is shown by his adjuration to Spenta Ārmaiti, already cited: "through the labour of husbandry let the ox grow fat for our nourishment" (*Y.* 48.5). The Vedic Indians too were flesh-eaters; and still today, despite the general Hindu dislike of taking life, the Brahmans in their highest ritual, the *yajña*, both offer and partake of the blood sacrifice.[93] Until modern times this was the observance in the Zoroastrian *yasna* also;[94] for the old custom held good in both faiths, that the best of what man himself ate he should offer to the divine beings, his guests, and partake of in communion with them in the act of worship. There was also the belief, as we have seen,[95] that since man must take life in order to live

[91] See Benveniste, "Sur la terminologie iranienne du sacrifice", *JA* 1964, 52-3.

[92] For the evidence see Boyce, *JRAS* 1966, 100-9; *BSOAS* XXX, 1967, 42-3; XXXIII 1970, 31-2; *Henning Mem. Vol.*, 67-79; *Mithraic Studies* I (ed. Hinnells), 106 ff.

[93] For references see Boyce, *BSOAS* XXIII, 31, nn. 52, 53. With regard to general Hindu abstinence from meat, it has been noted that this is stricter among Brahmans living in the hot south of India than among their northern brethren (see J. A. Dubois, *Hindu manners, customs and ceremonies*, transl. and ed. by H. K. Beauchamp, 3rd ed. Oxford 1906, 110-11). Buddhist Mongols of Central Asia continued to be carnivorous despite the precepts of their faith, the climate and their living conditions demanding it.

[94] See Bulsara, op. cit.; Boyce, *Henning Mem. Vol.*, 67-9.

[95] Above, pp. 149-50.

himself, he should temper the wrong of destroying another creature's physical existence by devoting its spirit, through consecration, to the divine beings, so that it at least might live on. The blood sacrifice was thus a disciplined act, reverently performed according to established rites with decent care for the beast to be slain, and remote from acts of wanton cruelty. There is no justification for supposing, therefore, against the testimony both of his own words[96] and the practice of his followers, that Zoroaster felt called upon to condemn this traditional form of worship, any more than the Buddha after him, or Jesus, or Muhammad.[97] Circumstances brought it about that Buddhists, Jews and Christians eventually abandoned the rite, but this was not due to the teachings of their prophets; and Islam maintains it to this day, without its stature as a great ethical faith being on that account impugned. Modern urban man, able to be carnivorous without ever seeing death, tends sometimes to confused thinking on this score.

Since the 19th-century view was that Zoroaster rejected all rituals except a contemplative reverence for fire, Western scholars also held for a time that he condemned the offering up of *haoma*; but since this is acknowledged to have been the central rite of Zoroastrian observance down the ages, opinion was earlier revised in this respect; for, as has been said, "it seems contrary to the evidence of the history of religions that a cult which had been fervently denounced by the founder of a religion should have been adopted ... by that founder's earliest disciples".[98] In this case the assumption of fervent denunciation was based on a Gathic verse, *Y.* 48.10: "When, O Mazdā ... wilt thou smite the filth (*mūthra-*) of this

[96] I.e. the references to *āzūiti*, *iždā*, and offerings to fire. The only direct evidence for Zoroaster's supposed rejection of the blood sacrifice is that extracted from three highly obscure Gathic verses, *Y.* 32.8,12,14, on whose rendering no two scholars wholly agree, and which cannot therefore properly be used for deductions running counter not only to the whole of the later literature and practice, but also to other more lucid passages in the *Gāthās* themselves.

[97] The Zoroastrian teaching concerning sacrifice is admirably expressed in a passage in the Slavonic *Book of Enoch* (ed. A. Vaillant, Paris 1952, 56): "He who shepherds badly the soul of cattle is lawless towards his own soul, but he who brings a sacrifice of pure cattle, it is a healing, he heals his own soul .. He who causes the death of any beast without [following the ritual prescriptions] is, this (being) an evil law, lawless towards his own soul". See S. Pines, *Numen, Supplement* XVIII, 1970, 83-4. In 1964 the writer was present on a number of occasions in Yazd and its villages when blood sacrifice was offered by Zoroastrians with due religious rites, which require all possible care for the animal up to the last instant (for details see Vol. IV); and she also passed the municipal slaughter house of Yazd on a hot summer's day, where flocks of frightened thirsty animals were waiting in the dust outside the building; and there could be no question as to which way of meeting its end was kinder to the beast. Even in the slaughter house, however, the Muslim butchers would dedicate each animal to Allah before cutting its throat, as is required by their own religious law.

[98] Zaehner, *Dawn*, 85. On the pagan *haoma* cult see above, pp. 157-60.

intoxicant (*mada-*), with which, out of enmity, the pagan priests (*karapan-*) deceive and with which, by their will, the evil rulers of the land (deceive)?" The term *mada-* is, however, of wide application, and can be used of anything which exhilarates the spirits;[99] and in view of the honoured place enjoyed by *haoma* in Zoroastrianism it seems that the *mada* condemned here by the prophet must be something else, perhaps a debilitating drug such as opium or hemp, which enslaves those who take it in chains of addiction. The words which he uses are very strong (for *mūthra* literally means either excrement[100] or urine[101]), and evidently expressed the harshest condemnation. The only other piece of positive evidence adduced from the *Gāthās* for the prophet's condemnation of the *haoma* cult comes from an obscure verse, *Y.* 32.14, where amid some puzzling account of evil-doing the term *dūraoša* occurs. This is a word of disputed meaning, which is known only as an epithet for *haoma*[102]; but since translations of the Gathic passage in which it occurs differ widely, no sound deductions can be drawn about its implication there. As for negative evidence, there is the fact that there is no explicit reference to *haoma* in the *Gāthās*. Considering the character of these hymns, this is a weak argument to rely on, especially since a reason for this particular omission is not hard to find. In the pagan cosmogony which underlies the prophet's teachings the animal kingdom, which he saw as protected by Vohu Manah, is represented by the Bull (*gav*); but the vegetable kingdom, protected by Amərətāt, is represented not by *haoma* but by the Plant (*urvarā*), which holds within its single stem the essence of all other plants.[103] Accordingly in the *Gāthās*, just as Vohu Manah is linked with *gav*, so Amərətāt is linked with *urvarā*, a concept which embraces *haoma* and every other beneficent thing that grows.

There is thus no reliable evidence from the *Gāthās* to set against the tradition and the observance of Zoroaster's followers, which testify to his

[99] On this word (YAv. *madha-*) see recently W. O'Flaherty apud R. Gordon Wasson, *Soma, divine mushroom*, 144; J. Brough, *BSOAS* XXXIV, 348-9.

[100] See Bartholomae, *Air. Wb.* 1189.

[101] If, that is, it ever had the meaning in Avestan of Skt. *mūtra*. This interpretation is favoured by Wasson (op. cit., 29 f.) because, it seems, the urine of the eater of *amanita muscaria* has the same hallucinogenic property as the original mushroom, and is therefore sometimes drunk to produce intoxication in its turn. He suggested, therefore, that it was for this reason that Zoroaster deliberately ehose the term *mūthra* to condemu the *mada* which Wasson, like most earlier scholars, assumed to be *haoma*. Brough, while accepting the assumption, denied this special significance to *mūthra* here , see art. cit., 343-8, with Wasson's response, *Soma and the fly-agaric*, 24-8, and further Gershevitch, "An Iranianist's view of the Soma controversy", *Mémorial Jean de Menasce*, Paris 1974, 405-35. If the *mada* of *Y.* 48.10 is not *haoma*, however, argument and connter-argument are alike irrelevant to it.

[102] See above, p. 162 with n. 102.

[103] See above, pp. 137-8.

maintenance of the blood sacrifice and *haoma* cult, together with the other rites of the ancient Ahuric religion. In the Younger Avesta the prophet is shown making his due acts of worship as a priest, "with *haoma-*, with *corn, with flesh, with *barəsman-*, with skill of tongue ... with offerings (*zaothra-*), with well-uttered words".[104] Like his forefathers, it seems, he devoted his offerings to diverse divine beings, but with one weighty reservation: he venerated only those who were *spənta*, who belonged to the good creation of Ahura Mazdā, and whose worship he knew through revelation to be sanctioned by the Lord. This is expressed in the last verse of one of the *Gāthās* (*Y.* 51.22), with reference, it seems, to an act of worship which he had just solemnised in honour of some unnamed divinity: "At whose sacrifice Ahura Mazdā knows the best for me according to righteousness (*aša-*). Those who were and are, those I shall worship by their names and shall approach with praise".[105] The phrase "those who were and are" appears to paraphrase the word *amərša* "immortal", and "at whose sacrifice Ahura Mazdā knows the best" is a limiting qualification similar to *spənta*, propitiation of the destructive powers being wholly forbidden.

This restriction appears, however, to have been Zoroaster's only break with the old tradition of making tangible offerings to the divine beings. Thus he declares: "Then to you, Ahura, and to Aša have we given as offering (*myazda-*),[106] with veneration, all the material possessions (*gaēthā-*) in our power" (*Y.* 34.3). The reference to Aša, lord of fire, together with the use of the word *myazda*, and the fact that *gaēthā* in the plural frequently refers to cattle, all suggest that the prophet's thoughts were turned here to the blood sacrifice, the greatest of man's gifts to the gods. The question then arises, what for him was the purpose of making such offerings? The answer seems to be that he accepted traditional beliefs in so far as to hold that such acts both pleased and invigorated the *spənta* divine beings, who, according to his dualistic doctrines, were not wholly powerful, though wholly good, and who therefore needed every source of strength to battle against evil. There is a Gathic verse said daily by Zoroastrians as part of the prayer to fire, which according to one interpretation runs as follows:[107] "Arise for me, O Ahura! Take strength

[104] *Yt.* 5, 104; for this rendering of **yava* see below, p. 269 n. 82.

[105] For this translation by W. B. Henning see apud Boyce, *BSOAS* XXXII, 1969, 18. The verse had earlier been translated in a variety of ways, none wholly satisfactory grammatically. On its later adaptation, the *yeŋhē hātąm* prayer, see p. 262 below.

[106] On the meaning of this word see above, pp. 148-9.

[107] For this interpretation see Humbach, *Gathas*, I 103, II 42. The rendering of Spəništā Mainyū as a vocative addressed to Ahura Mazdā rather than as an instrumental is that of Kavasji Kanga (see Taraporewala, *The Divine Songs of Zarathushtra*, 343).

through devotion, O Holiest Spirit, Mazdā! (Take) power through the good offering (*ādā-*), strong might through righteousness, plenitude through good intention" (*Y.* 33.12). The prophet sees the offerings as a means also of attacking evil directly. "I who sacrifice would keep from you, O Mazdā, disobedience and bad intention" (*Y.* 33.4). Moreover, since both devotion and sacrifice (*ārmaiti, īžā*) are good in themselves, the merit of offering them will accrue to the worshipper's store of goodness in the hereafter (*Y.* 49.10),[108] and so help to make the kingdom his at judgment day. Zoroaster's beliefs about the value of sacrifice thus appear to have had much in common with those of his pagan forbears, who also, it seems, thought of the rite as of threefold merit, benefiting the gods, the corporeal world, and the sacrificer himself. The prophet adapted the old beliefs to his own ethical teachings, however, by enjoining that offerings should be made only with good intention and to *spənta* beings, so that they might help to bring about the salvation of the good creation and the redemption of the righteous man. That material offerings were not, moreover, enough in themselves he made abundantly clear in another verse which is still spoken daily in the presence of fire:[109] "Then as gift (*rātā-*) Zoroaster gives to Mazdā the life indeed of his own body, the choiceness of his good intentions, and those of his acts and thoughts which accord with righteousness, and (his) obedience and dominion" (*Y.* 33.14). Moreover, the prophet declares that "at the gift of veneration to your fire I shall think of righteousness to the utmost of my power" (*Y.* 43.9), material and spiritual being thus inextricably intermingled.

These last words provide what seems the clearest indication that we have of how Zoroaster, a priest, reached his complex doctrine of the seven great Amərša Spəntas and the seven creations: through pondering, that is, on the daily rituals in which he had been trained since childhood, which must, through ceaseless repetition, have been as familiar to him as drawing breath. These rituals, as we have seen, had as one of their main purposes the furthering of the creations of fire and water.[110] The other creations of plants and animals were also consecrated through the service; and probably the pagan Iranian priests, pondering like their Brahman cousins on the significance of religious rites, had already, before Zoroaster preached, brought these daily observances into relation with their theories about the sevenfold formation of the world: thus the sky was held to be

[108] See above, p. 152.

[109] This rendering again is essentially Humbach's (see his *Gathas*, I 104, II 42-3), who adopts the variant ms. reading *aša* rather than *ašāi*.

[110] See above, Ch. 6.

represented in the ritual by the metal implements, water by the pure water used in sprinkling and libation, earth by the soil of the *pāvi*, plants by *haoma* and pomegranate, the wheaten cakes and strew of grass, animals by the sacrificial beasts, and also by milk, butter and the bull's hair of the sieve, and man by the celebrating priest himself. The seventh creation, fire, was ever present in its brazier, at all rituals.[111] Thus in celebrating the *yasna* the priest, himself a member of one of the creations, purified and strengthened the other six which make up the world in which man lives, and upon which his life depends. Zoroaster's own contribution appears to have been twofold: in meditating on the significance of the ritual for the diverse material creations he reached, it seems, his doctrine of the one supreme Creator, God of gods, who had made them all, and to whom every act of worship should ultimately be directed; and he added a further dimension to the meaning of the ritual itself by seeing in it an ethical purpose also, apprehending in and behind each thing which he as priest handled or looked upon something immaterial, a virtue which was also a divinity, a quality to be desired and striven for in daily life and a *yazata* to be invoked for help in its pursuit. So through these rituals, performed primarily to benefit the physical world and to honour its Creator, priest and worshippers could also, according to Zoroaster's new teachings, seek a moral good, which likewise was a benefit to the physical creation of Ahura Mazdā, since this, the prophet held, was itself ethical in concept and aim, the work of a Being who was wholly good.

By what processes, intellectual, intuitive, or mystical, Zoroaster reached these doctrines can never be known, or by what stages he evolved them. But whether his belief in the supreme Creator was arrived at first, or whether he reached this through meditating on the lesser Immortals who guarded each creation, in his final system these two doctrines, of the one original God and of the six great divinities whom he first called into being, are indissolubly linked. Through his doctrine of the great Aməša Spəntas, themselves personifications of what was spiritual and desirable, and yet at the same time guardians of the physical world in all its solidity, Zoroaster wove together abstract and concrete, spiritual and material, seeing morality in the physical, and apprehending in all beneficent and wholesome things a striving, whether conscious or unconscious, towards the one ultimate goal—the recreation of the harmonious and happy state of being which had existed before Angra Mainyu and his creatures damaged the originally perfect world of Ahura Mazdā. As a result of his teachings, Zoroastrians have a unique sense of religious duty towards their fellow-creatures and their environment. By caring for the well-being of animals and inflicting as little suffering upon them as is possible in this now imperfect world, by nurturing plants and trees to their fullest growth, by tilling and enriching the soil, by keeping water and fire unpolluted, even by working and cherishing metals so that they are useful, fair and bright, a Zoroastrian both honours the individual Aməša Spənta concerned and contributes his own small part towards keeping the world *spənta*.[112] At the same time he, as a member of the sixth creation under the especial charge of Ahura Mazdā, has the duty to make his own physical and moral being his prime care, in order that he may himself reach full stature. As the crown of creation, he must make a dwelling within himself for all the other Aməša Spəntas as well as for Spənta Mainyu, the Spirit of God.[113] It is not enough that he should tend animals carefully; he should also receive into his heart their protector, Vohu Manah, Good Intention. He must embody Khšathra, Dominion, in himself by exercising proper authority: "Every man has authority and a kingdom—the king, the baron, the head of a district or village, the master of a house. The last has authority over sons and men-servants, his wife over daughters and maid-servants... Each can and should in his place exert right authority."[114] Each should also in due season show submission to those above him, and to God, thus making Ārmaiti his own. By self-discipline, through temperate enjoyment of the good things of this world, a man may also hope to ally to himself Haurvatāt and Amərətāt, Health and Life; and in all his thoughts, words and actions justice or righteousness should prevail, so that Aša is always with him. When these great seven abide in a man, the forces of evil have no power to invade or control him. This is the essence of Zoroaster's ethical teaching. Moreover, since Zoroastrianism knows no fugitive and cloistered virtue, it is also the duty of each believer to aid

[111] The association in this way of the six Aməša Spəntas with the ritual implements and offerings is still thus understood by Irani priests and orthodox *behdīns*, see Boyce, *BSOAS* XXXIII, 1970, 28 n. 39, and further in Vol. IV. Molé approached an understanding of Zoroastrian doctrine on this point, but was handicapped by his assumption that the *Gāthās* represented a co-ordinated liturgy, and by seeing the great Aməša Spəntas "less as autonomous divinities than as functions playing a part in the structure of the sacrifice" (an interpretation which seems a half-truth). See his article in *Numen* VIII, 1961, 58 n. 12.

[112] This doctrine is still observed by orthodox Zoroastrians in their own lives, a fact of which the *juddīn* becomes perhaps most keenly aware through contact with village communities, where representatives of all the "creations" are encountered naturally in the course of daily life. See further in Vol. IV.

[113] This doctrine is expressed in diverse hortatory Pahlavi texts, see, e.g., J. M. Jamasp-Asana (ed.), *Pahlavi Texts* I, Bombay 1913, 45.6-9 = *Čīdag Andarz ī Pōryōtkēšān*, § 27, transl. Zaehner, *Teachings of the Magi*, 24 (for other translations see this *Handbuch*, IV.2.1, 52 n. 5).

[114] Lommel, *Zarathustra*, ed. Schlerath, 257-8; cf. *Y.* 31.6.

and cherish other good men in the struggle of life, "for (every) just man is the counterpart of the Lord Ohrmazd".[115] The sense of responsibility towards one's fellow-men is one of the strongest characteristics of Zoroastrianism.

The Immortals are not themselves regarded as passive in this, waiting merely to be made guests of the righteous man. "O Bounteous Ārmaiti", urges Zoroaster, "instruct men's consciences through *aša-*" (*Y.* 33.13). "Ārmaiti" he declares, "pleads with the spirit in which there is uncertainty" (*Y.* 31.12). Once a man had chosen rightly, then "to him came Ārmaiti, with Khšathra, Vohu Manah and Aša" (*Y.* 30.7). These beings are actively beneficent, *spənta*, caring for the good. Stress has been laid, however, by some scholars on the lack of individual characterisation among them, as if this should mean that they were imperfectly apprehended as *yazatas*. The truer explanation seems to be that Zoroaster saw them, both in vision and as a matter of doctrine, as a group of peers, equal in power and beauty, and united in the one purpose of furthering the creation of Ahura Mazdā. There was no scope, therefore, for the development of individual mythological traits. Comparing the moral with the amoral, one finds a similar lack of individual traits among the Vedic Maruts, who likewise were regarded as "brothers of equal age, of equal birth, of one mind and one abode".[116] But whereas the Maruts act as a group, the Aməša Spəntas have their distinctive tasks, and thus are distinguished by their functions, although so closely united, and are often separately invoked.

Ahura Mazdā, being wholly good, comprehends in his own being all the qualities which are personified by the six Aməša Spəntas individually, which can also be possessed by Ahura Mazdā's especial creation, the just man. This emerges from various passages of the *Gāthās*, such as the following: "To them [i.e. just people] Ahura Mazdā, uniting himself with (their?) good intention (*vohu- manah-*), through (his?) dominion (*khšathra-*) answered, being well acquainted with (their?) righteousness (*aša-*): "Your good beneficent devotion (*spənta- ārmaiti-*) we choose for ourselves, it shall be ours" (*Y.* 32.2). This verse provides yet another illustration of the use of what are also the proper names of the Aməša Spəntas as common nouns—with the usual element of doubt, as to whether all of them are being so used (for one could also understand the opening lines as meaning ... "Ahura Mazdā, uniting himself with Vohu Manah, through Khšathra, answered, being well acquainted with Aša ..."). Such transitions and

[115] *Šnš.* XV.8 (Kotwal, 59).
[116] Keith, *Rel. and phil.* I, 151.

ambiguities supply another reason why some Western scholars have characterised the Aməša Spəntas as "shadowy abstractions". But as we have seen, to the Indo-Iranians the passage of thought from a quality to the god who personified it was not difficult, nor was there anything necessarily "shadowy" about the being thus apprehended. This adjective appears particularly inept when applied to the radiant divinities of Zoroaster's own vision, whose light obliterated for him his own shadow upon earth. Moreover, ambiguities about quality and *yazata* appear natural in the *Gāthās* themselves, which were composed, it seems, in a deliberately subtle, esoteric, priestly convention. In the Zoroastrian tradition (partly founded, one must presume, on plainer and more general expositions of his doctrines addressed by the prophet to the people at large) there is no ambiguity whatsoever concerning the divinity of the Aməša Spəntas, although the double concept of personification and quality naturally persists. As has been justly said: "The whole Zoroastrian system from the beginning to the end, from the *Gāthās* to the latest *Ravāyats*, postulates the existence of the Amshaspands as a cardinal tenet of faith".[117]

It seems natural that Zoroaster as priest should have been concerned to give his new doctrines expression in observances, so that belief could declare itself through worship and be sustained by it; and there is no reason therefore to doubt the tradition that attributes to the prophet himself the founding of the feasts later known as the *gahāmbārs*. It appears, however, that his "founding" was in fact a re-dedication of five pagan festivals of the pastoral and farming year,[118] together with a sixth, that of the *fravašis*, or All Souls.[119] These festivals were left their ancient names, but each was now devoted to one of the six creations, in due order, through the year: sky, water, earth, plants, animals, man.[120] In the existing Zoroastrian liturgy all six festivals are consecrated to Ahura Mazdā as the "high Master" (*ratu- bərəzant-*), supreme over all. The sixth festival of All Souls is, however, especially his, the day upon which man, his particular creation, remembers other men who have lived on earth before him, and above all those "who have conquered for righteousness" (*yōi ašāi vao-*

[117] Jackson, *Avesta, Pahlavi and Ancient Persian Studies in honour of P. B. Sanjana*, 161.
[118] See above, pp. 173-4, 175 with n. 187.
[119] See above, pp. 122-4.
[120] The common assumption in the West that these feasts were only brought into connection with the six creations in later i.e. Sasanian times is connected with the other assumption, now shown to be untenable, that the link between the Aməša Spəntas and creations was not part of Zoroaster's own teachings. The fact that the names of the festivals survive in YAv. forms proves nothing about the date at which the festivals themselves were first instituted, since naturally names would change with the changing language (cf. English Easter < OEng. Éastre, connected with the pagan goddess Eostre).

narə).[121] Thus, it seems, Zoroaster absorbed into his ethical religion the powerful pagan cult of the *fravašis*, allowing this great festival for the departed the culminating place still in his own religious year. The six *gahāmbārs* remained of the greatest importance in Zoroastrianism, feasts of obligation which to ignore constituted a sin that "goes to the Bridge", to be answered for at Judgment Day. They have been kept devoutly by rich and poor alike, and are especially times to meet together for worship and joy, to forgive offences and to foster loving kindness among all true believers. Their purpose, to celebrate the six creations, was clearly apprehended, and they alone among the Zoroastrian feasts attracted no myths or semi-secular customs down the years. They continued in fact "Gathic" both in spirit and observance.

There was, however, the doctrine of a seventh pervasive creation, that of fire; and this creation came to be associated with the traditional feast of the spring equinox. It seems very likely that Zoroaster himself gave to this re-dedicated festival the name of "New Day" (Middle Persian Nō Rōz), for he saw it evidently as an annual symbol, through the resurgence of nature, of the final resurrection and dawn of the "new day" of eternal bliss.[122] For Zoroastrians this is therefore a feast of the resurrection, an equivalent of the Christian Easter (which may owe something indirectly to its inspiration); but it is also consecrated to fire, for its dedication is to Rapithwina, the spirit of summer noon, who, personifying blazing heat, is the helper and associate of Aša, lord of fire.[123] As a festival of one of the creations Nō Rōz, like the six *gahāmbārs*, is a feast of obligation, the only other one in the Zoroastrian calendar; and being the last of the seven it was celebrated with sevenfold offerings (as it still is today, even in Muslim Iran)—offerings which were evidently symbols of the seven Aməša Spəntas with their seven creations,[124] whose worship was thereby annually complete, Nō Rōz being at once both the ending and beginning of the devotional year.

Zoroaster's profoundly original concepts of the one Creator and of the six Aməša Spəntas grew harmoniously, it seems, out of the pagan Iranian religion and its observances, a noble development due to the religious and moral genius of the prophet himself, but one prepared for by the thoughts and worship of generations of his predecessors. His new teaching had old roots, and there is nothing to suggest that he sought to cut it off from them

[121] *Y.* 26.6.
[122] See above, p. 175, and further Ch. 9 and 10 below, and Vol. II.
[123] See Boyce, *Pratidānam, Studies presented to F. B. J. Kuiper*, 201 ff.
[124] See Boyce, *BSOAS* XXXIII, 1970, 538 with n. 101.

by breaking generally with inherited beliefs and usages. Thus, despite the statements of generations of Western scholars (which by now have had their influence upon the Parsis), there is not the smallest piece of evidence to suggest that his proclamation of one original Godhead led him to deny the present existence of other *yazatas*, lesser created beings according to his revelation, the servants of the Lord, to whom veneration should be duly accorded. Even the abhorred *daēvas* were acknowledged by Zoroaster as divinities, powerful to influence men; but their worship alone was rejected by him, on the grounds that they were wicked and sought, in company with the demon Wrath, to trouble and delude mankind.[125]

Apart from the seven Aməša Spəntas, almost all the *yazatas* known to us from the Avesta appear to have been worshipped in pagan times. Each can be shown to aid the good creation in some way, either by furthering the material world, as do the nature gods, or by helping man to live his life on earth happily and well. The term Aməša Spənta can therefore be applied to them generally.[126] Of these lesser divinities a few only are mentioned in the *Gāthās*; for it is plain that Zoroaster's own spiritual life centred on Ahura Mazdā and the great six, and that his reverence for the other *yazatas* was inherited and instinctive, and in no way occupied his ardent thoughts. Yet even so the prophet twice speaks of the Lord Wisdom together with his brother Ahuras, in a close *dvandva* compound. The first passage runs: "(May) Mazdā (and the other) Ahuras (come) hither, and Aša ..." (*Y.* 30.9); the second: "If Aša (is) to be invoked, and Mazdā (and the other) Ahuras, and Aši and Ārmaiti ..." (*Y.* 31.4). Despite the wording of these lines, which indicate that Aša and Ārmaiti are not numbered among them, some scholars have sought to identify the Ahuras here with the Aməša Spəntas of Zoroaster's own revelation, seeking thus to maintain the theory of the prophet's strict monotheism (the Aməša Spəntas being then treated merely as aspects of God). There is no evidence, however, to support this interpretation, for nowhere else is the term ever applied to any of this group of divinities, or to any lesser *yazatas* other than Mithra and *Vouruna Apąm Napāt.[127]

In the second verse just cited the name of Aši occurs as well. We have met this divinity already as a goddess of Fortune, and one epithet used of her by Zoroaster, "great-gifted" *mązā.rayi-*(*Y.* 43.12), richly suggests the pagan concept. But in the ethical *Gāthās* the common noun *ašī* is used in the sense of reward (for good or ill), rather than for unmerited acquisi-

[125] Aēšma, "Wrath", is the only demon to be named by Zoroaster, apart from Angra Mainyu and the Drug, see above, p. 87.
[126] See Boyce, *BSOAS* XXXIII, 1970, 36-7, with n. 87.
[127] On the three Ahuras of Iranian tradition see above, p. 23 ff.

tion, and the divinity similarly becomes the personification of due recompense, rather than of capricious luck.[128] As such she is regularly spoken of in the Zoroastrian scriptures as the "good Aši", Aši vaŋhvī, in distinction presumably to the amoral pagan concept. The prophet speaks to Ahura Mazdā of "that hand by which you hold these rewards (*ašīš*) which you will give to the follower of the Drug and to the follower of Aša" (*Y.* 43.4). "At the birth of the world ... you established an evil (reward) for evil, a good reward (*aši-*) for good" (*Y.* 43.5). Since good and evil conduct depend for Zoroaster on the moral choice of the individual, who is "master of (his) own reward (*aši-*) at will" (*Y.* 50.9), and who, if he is wise, acts so as to obtain a good *aši-* (*Y.* 50.3), reward is several times associated with *vohu- manah-*, good intention (e.g. *Y.* 33.13). As a divinity Aši is invoked in *dvandva* compound with Ārmaiti (*Y.* 31.4); and she appears herself apportioning the sentence or reward to be given to each man hereafter (*Y.* 34.12, 43.12). In the latter verse she is the companion of Sraoša, *yazata* of Obedience and guardian of prayer:[129] "Sraoša, accompanied by great-gifted Aši, who shall apportion the rewards (*ašīš*) to the two groups...".[130] Sraoša has in fact the epithet *ašivant*, "possessing rewards, rewarding",[131] which suggests both the closeness of his link with Aši and the part played by him at the individual judgment. As in the case of Aši, the name of the divinity Sraoša appears in the *Gāthās* together with the common noun with which it is identical. Zoroaster speaks of his own obedience to Ahura Mazdā (*Y.* 33.14; 28.5), and seeks obedience from other men towards himself (*Y.* 45.5). The divinity Sraoša he associates, like Aši, with the Aməša Spəntas of his own vision. "Then let Sraoša come with Vohu Manah, O Mazdā, to whomsoever you will" (*Y.* 44.16); and once he even speaks of him as "greatest of all (*vīspō.mazišta-*)" (*Y.* 33.5). Probably as he uttered these words the prophet was thinking of Sraoša's greatness as being in his guardianship of prayer (through which man approaches God); and it was presumably as a development of this that in later Zoroastrian tradition Sraoša came to be venerated as Ahura Mazdā's regent on earth, with responsibility therefore to care for his especial creation, man. In living Zoroastrianism he is invoked accordingly more often than any divinity except Ahura Mazdā himself.[132]

[128] Above, pp. 65-6.
[129] See above, pp. 60-2.
[130] On this verse, with its close juxtaposition of Aši/*aši*, see Lommel, *Rel.*, 82.
[131] See Bartholomae, *Air. Wb.* 259; on *ašivā* in *Y.* 51.5 (ibid., 242) see Gershevitch, *AHM*, 325 on p. 194.
[132] See, with references, Boyce and Kotwal, *BSOAS* XXXIV, 1971, 306 ff.

It has been suggested[133] that the reason why, of all the lesser beings of the Zoroastrian pantheon, Sraoša and Aši are particularly mentioned in the *Gāthās* is that they, like the seven great Immortals, have an especial connection with the religious services which seemingly provided the basis for Zoroaster's meditations: Sraoša because he is *tanu.mąthra* "having the sacred word as body", and so is represented by the liturgy itself (in the same way that the great Immortals are represented by the offerings, ritual objects and the celebrant); Aši because the ceremony duly performed requires recompense for the priests, and so she is represented by the *ašōdād*, the obligatory gift to them.[134] In the Younger Avesta Sraoša remains close to the seven Immortals, whereas his "sister" Aši is much less prominent. Perhaps this is partly because she, the giver of rewards, could not dwell in men's hearts as could the god Obedience and the others, and so she remained a little outside the inmost group of ethical divinities, all of whom can be immanent in man. Her concept appears altogether simpler than that of the seven Immortals and Sraoša, for she personifies only recompense (whether tangible, or a sentence of doom or bliss), whereas each of the others personifies a quality, but protects something else through which he may also be represented (be it prayer or cattle etc).

Zoroaster also names in the *Gāthās* a small group of divinities who appear especially associated with the sacrifice. There is Gāuš Tašan, "Creator of the Bull", who in *Y.* 29.2 is mentioned alone, but who appears with Aša in *Y.* 46.9, and with Ārmaiti in *Y.* 31.9. In *Y.* 29 Gāuš Urvan, the "Soul of the Bull", figures largely, the divinity with whom the spirit of the sacrificial animal is united at death.[135] In Zoroastrian ritual Gāuš Tašan and Gāuš Urvan are regularly associated, as in this hymn, particularly in connection with the animal offering.[136] Zoroaster also speaks of *īžā*/Ižā, sacrifice and *yazatā* of the sacrifice (Vedic Iḍā).[137] In *Y.* 49.10 he refers to laying up in heaven the merit of "veneration (*nəmas-*) and devotion (*ārmaiti-*) and sacrifice (*īžā-*)". In *Y.* 50.8 he offers worship to the Lord: "In the footsteps of Ižā I shall circumambulate you, O Mazdā, with hands outstretched"; and in *Y.* 51.8 he says: "To him who secures for himself indeed by Ižā (and) by Aša the good dominion (*khšathra-*) ... (to him) comes, for (his) deeds, the best thing [i.e. Paradise], O Mazdā". Although the rites of Ižā are performed to this day by a few orthodox Irani Zoroastrians,[138] the *yazatā* herself is not venerated by name in the

[133] See Boyce, *BSOAS* XXXIII, 1970, 33.
[134] On *ašōdād* see above, pp. 169-70.
[135] On these two divinities see above, pp. 81-2, 150.
[136] See Boyce, *Henning Memorial Volume*, 78-9.
[137] See above, p. 164.
[138] See Boyce, *JRAS* 1966, 107-8.

later tradition. Nor is another divinity who is spoken of once by Zoroaster, who says: "The best Tušnāmaiti taught me to proclaim: "Let a man not be desirous of pleasing the many wicked" (*Y.* 43.15). This *yazatā* takes us into the realm of contemplation, for she personifies "Silent Thought", and as such has her fitting place too at the worship of God.[139] The personification in this case seems only slight (to judge from her absence from the later scriptures), but it is in harmony with various others to be found in the *Yasna Haptaŋhāiti*.

For all their wide-ranging thought, their ethical and metaphysical content, the *Gāthās* thus appear closely linked with the ancient rituals of the *yasna*—not indeed as liturgical texts composed to accompany these rituals step by step, but rather as meditative works based generally upon their celebration. It is for this reason, presumably, that they were preserved by the followers of the prophet as part of the liturgy of this divine service itself. This interpretation helps towards an understanding of the striking mingling of concrete and abstract in the prophet's words, since his thought appears to have been reached through the tangible rites of worship, so that when (for example) he made the sacrificial offering to fire he meditated upon good intention and righteousness, and actually saw in this offering, and in the flames to which he gave it, the divinities Vohu Manah and Aša. This also explains why the names of the Gathic divinities are used by him so often in the instrumental case. As the priest made the act of worship *with* the offerings, so man should direct his life *with* good intention and righteousness, and *with* the help of the divine beings who personify these qualities. It further aids understanding of why in the *Gāthās* Ahura Mazdā is addressed now in the singular, now in the plural, as if united at times with the lesser Immortals; for he was present at the *yasna* through his Bounteous Spirit, Spəənta Mainyu, and the other divinities were present too, in close collegiality, so that all had their share in this holy act, which was one that brought about "a continual streaming out of divine energy, which with the energy of man protects the world";[140] but which also, in Zoroaster's teaching, was an act of self-dedication by the worshippers, through which they offered themselves to God, and sought to bring him and the great Immortals into their own hearts and lives.

[139] It is usual, following Geldner (see Bartholomae, *Air. Wb.* 658), to identify Tušnāmaiti with Ārmaiti; but this appears to have been done in the interests of maintaining the theory of Zoroaster's strict monotheism (Ārmaiti being then treated as an "aspect" only of Ahura Mazdā). No adequate reason for it has been advanced. Otherwise Nyberg, *Rel.*, 112-3.

[140] Lehmann, *Die Perser*, 221. The "monotheistic" school have interpreted this addressing of Ahura Mazdā in the plural as due to his being associated with one or more of the Aməša Spəntas as his own "aspects"; but why addressing a divinity in connection with a particular aspect of his own character should lead to his being conceived as two persons is by no means clear.

CHAPTER NINE

THE TWO STATES AND THE THREE TIMES

As far as can be determined, the pagan doctrine with regard to cosmic history had been that first there existed many gods, who variously shaped this world, and peopled it by sacrifice.[1] It is also probable that association of the souls of the blessed with the gods in heaven had led to the idea of an immortality of the human spirit stretching backwards in time as well as forwards, as did that of the gods, so that pre-existence was postulated for the individual soul.[2] Zoroaster's own doctrines appear to have been as follows:[3] at first there existed only the two mighty beings, Ahura Mazdā and his great adversary. There followed, after these two had made their choice between good and evil, the creation or evocation by Ahura Mazdā of the six great Immortals, and subsequently (either directly or through them) of the other *yazatas*, and probably also of the souls of men, since no reason appears why the prophet should have abandoned pagan doctrine in this respect. *Yasna* 29 suggests, moreover, that he adopted the doctrine of the pre-existence of the souls of beneficent animals also, a tenet apparently closely connected with the veneration of the divinity Gəuš Urvan. Probably, therefore, one should attribute to Zoroaster himself the full doctrine so well known from the later theological works of his faith, that everything living has had a pre-existence, that Ahura Mazdā brought all things into being in an earlier, disembodied state before giving them substantial form within this world. Hence, one may suppose, Zoroaster's own emphasis on corporeal (*astvant-*) life as distinct from incorporeal. The Pahlavi terms for the two states are *mēnōg* and *gētīg*, deriving from Avestan adjectives **mainyavaka* "of the spirit" and **gaēthyaka* "corporeal".[4] No ethical distinction exists between these two, for both are the

[1] See above, pp. 137-40, 141.

[2] See above, pp. 111, 127-8.

[3] In general on these matters (but with a commentary much concerned with Zurvanism) see H. S. Nyberg, "Questions de cosmogonie et de cosmologie mazdéennes", *JA* 1929, 193-310; 1931, 1-134, 193-244. Also R. C. Zaehner, *Zurvan*; M. Molé, *Culte, mythe et cosmologie dans l'Iran ancien*, and "La naissance du monde dans l'Iran préislamique" in *La naissance du monde, Sources orientales* I, *aux editions du Seuil*, Paris 1959, 301-28.

[4] See Nyberg, *JA* 1931, 31 ff.; *Rel.*, 20 ff. Although the etymology appears clear, and in general the nsage is straightforward, there have been many attempts to find satisfactory renderings of these two words other than "spiritual" and "physical", largely because of the ethical contrast so often associated with this pair of words. There are complexities also in Zoroastrian usage, such as the existence of *mēnōg* gods and *gētīg* gods, and conflicting

creation of Ahura Mazdā, and hence good. Indeed what is remarkable in Zoroaster's teachings is that he evidently regarded the *gētīg* state as better than the *mēnōg*, since in it the *mēnōg* creation received the added good of tangible and sentient form. "The transfer to the *gētīg* state by no means signifies in itself a fall, but completion and plenitude."[5] Unlike the *mēnōg* creation, however, the *gētīg* one is open to assault and corruption by Angra Mainyu and his malignant powers; for the purpose of Ahura Mazdā in establishing "corporeal life", *astvant- uštana-*, is actively to oppose evil, to create such conditions that all who are *spənta*, gods and men, may struggle in harmony with the *spənta* physical world against the external forces of wickedness and make an end of them. This doctrine has been characterised as a "pro-cosmic dualism", since according to it the material world is good and evil attacks it from outside, whereas in the "anti-cosmic dualism" of such faiths as Manichaeism and Orphism the world itself is considered essentially bad, and belongs to the evil powers.[6]

The Zoroastrian theological works distinguish between unlimited time, that is, eternity, and limited or bounded time, within which the events of cosmic history take place.[7] This limited time is divided into two vast periods. The first is that which followed the making of their choices by Ahura Mazdā and Angra Mainyu; during it Ahura Mazdā created all things, first in *mēnōg* and then in *gētīg* state, both perfect. This time is accordingly referred to in the Pahlavi books simply as *Bundahišn* "Creation". In the Slavonic *Book of Enoch*, which apparently derives in part from Zoroastrian sources, it is said:[8] "Before everything was, before all creation came to pass, the Lord established the Aion of Creation. Thereafter he created all His creation, the visible and the invisible." According to the Zoroastrian tradition, Ahura Mazdā achieved the

statements that Ahura Mazdā is *mēnōg*, and also (in his perfection) both *mēnōg* and *gētīg*. There were evidently anomalies with these definitions within the Zoroastrian tradition itself. The use of the terms in the Pahlavi books has recently been discussed by S. Shaked, "The notions *mēnōg* and *gētīg* in the Pahlavi texts and their relation to eschatology", *Acta Orientalia* XXXIII, 1971, 59-107.

[5] H. Corbin, "Le temps cyclique dans le mazdéisme et dans l'ismaélisme", *Eranos-Jahrbuch* XX, 1951, 153.

[6] See U. Bianchi, *Zamān i Ōhrmazd*, *Storia e Scienza delle Religioni* 1958, Ch. V.

[7] See, e.g. *Greater Bundahišn* I.39 (BTA, 13). Discussions on the question of time *(zurvān)* in Zoroastrianism are complicated, as so frequently in Iranian religion, by the existence of both a common noun and a god personifying what this means. The present writer agrees with those scholars who consider the concept of the *yazata* Zurvān to have evolved only relatively late—i.e. in the Achaemenian period. In the present chapter accordingly it is only *zurvān*, time, which is considered, and not the divinity.

[8] Ed. and transl. by A. Vaillant, *Le livre des secrets d'Hénoch*, Paris 1952, 60; see S. Pines, "Eschatology and the concept of time in the Slavonic Book of Enoch", *Numen*, Supp. XVIII, 1970, 77. On the Book of Enoch in general, with further references, see D. Winston, *History of Religions* V, 197-8, with n. 38.

wondrous act of creation while celebrating with the six Aməša Spəntas a *mēnōg* act of worship, a spiritual *yasna*;[9] and this may well be original to Zoroaster's teachings, considering the deep significance which he evidently attached to this religious office.[10]

The second period within limited time is called in Pahlavi *Gumēzišn* or "Mixture"; and it begins with the assault by Angra Mainyu on the *gētīg* creation. The pagan concept of the world in its first state was most probably, as we have seen, that it was static and empty except for the one man, one plant, one animal; and that it was brought into movement and growth through a threefold sacrifice by the gods. This doctrine underwent a radical and somewhat awkward change in Zoroaster's teachings, according to which the original static world was perfect, alteration coming to it not through beneficial sacrifice but through the malicious assault of the Hostile Spirit. The killing of Gayō.marətan and the Uniquely-created Bull,[11] and the destruction of the Plant, all *spənta* creations, were accordingly evil acts; but out of them the embattled powers of good snatched advantage for their cause by creating from what had perished more men, plants and animals. Thus the old doctrine, that through the sacrifice of life more life was produced, survived, but the motive for the act and the identity of the actors were altered, without this affecting the general doctrine and practice of sacrifice in the present time of Mixture; for once death and destruction had been brought into the world, immortality ceased for *gētīg* creatures, and was replaced by the inevitable processes of birth and death. In this state of things devout sacrifice has a *spənta* function, furthering the struggle of the good creation—a function which will continue till the last sacrifice takes place at the end of limited time, and immortality becomes again the lot of all God's creatures.

Another discrepancy exists with regard to the cosmogony which was apparently present already in the pagan doctrines from which Zoroaster proceeded, namely that whereas in its original state the *gētīg* world had only a unique representative of the creation of man, the *mēnōg* world already knew the plurality of *fravašis*—although apparently only one

[9] *GBd.* III.23 (BTA, 45); cf. *Pahl. Riv. Dd.* XVI.b (ed. Dhabhar, 47-9).

[10] On the importance of the *yasna* for creating, maintaining and renewing the world see Molé, *Culte*, 85-147; and cf. Corbin, art. cit., 160.

[11] In *GBd.* IV.20 (BTA, 51) it is said that, before Ahriman came to the bull, Ohrmazd gave the animal "medicinal *mang*" *(mang ī bēšaz)* "so that its distress would be the less". It has been argued that this "mang" was not a sleep-inducing narcotic, but a deadly poison (Henning, *Zoroaster*, 32); but apart from the contrary testimony of other Pahlavi occurrences of the word (see below, p. 280), this interpretation appears impossible on theological grounds. Death is an evil which belongs to Ahriman, and it is he who brings it upon the creatures of Ohrmazd.

Soul of the Bull. Such anomalies could hardly, however, be avoided as different traditions and beliefs were woven together into one system, which in itself was complex and related to past, present and future.

Angra Mainyu's assault is represented as affecting each of the seven creations.[12] First he pierced the crystal sky in order to penetrate the *gētīg* world; next he sullied water, making it salt, turned parts of earth to desert, and destroyed the plant, animal and man; and coming lastly to fire, he "mingled smoke and darkness in it",[13] thus blighting all the beautiful creation of Ahura Mazdā. Then the seven creations rallied their forces and counter-attacked,[14] and so the great struggle of the time of Mixture began. In this struggle Angra Mainyu is himself aided by evil powers of his own begetting, the *daēvas* and demons,[15] who do not, it seems, any more than their dread master, themselves possess *gētīg* forms, but who are often able, by suborning the creatures of Ahura Mazdā, to enter into them, so that these become the embodiment of spectral but aggressive evil.[16] Thus the world has become "mixed". This second period, when good and evil contend, stretches away to the end of "limited time", when Ahura Mazdā's creation will be restored once more, in *gētīg* form, to its original perfect state. This glorious moment is termed Frašō.kərəti (Pahlavi Frašegird), the "Making Wonderful".[17] Therewith history ceases and eternity stretches out again unbroken, uneventful; for, wickedness having been destroyed, Ahura Mazdā and all *spənta* gods and men will live for ever in perfect, untroubled goodness, harmony and peace. This eternity to come constitutes the Third Time, called in the Pahlavi books *Wizārišn*, "Separation", for then goodness will be separated from evil again and forever. In a sense therefore Zoroaster's concept of time is cyclical, with a return in the Third Time to the perfection enjoyed at the end of the First; but it is "the concept of cyclical Time which is not the Time of an eternal return, but the Time of a return to an eternal origin".[18] There is no ceaseless recurrence of events, that is, as in Babylonian cosmic speculation, but a linear development to a once more changeless state.

[12] See, e.g., *GBd.*IV.10-28 (BTA, 49-53).
[13] *GBd.* IV.27.
[14] *GBd.*VI (BTA, 71-85). In this chapter the *mēnōg* creations (i.e. the *mēnōg ī asmān* etc.) are represented as fighting back through their *gētīg* forms.
[15] *GBd.*I.47-49, 55 (BTA, 15-17, 19).
[16] These doctrines naturally produce their problems, and in fact in the tradition many species of creatures are regarded as inherently *daēvic* (e.g. wolves and scorpions), and actually generated by evil acts (see Ch. 12, below).
[17] On this term see most recently Bailey, *Zor. Problems*, 2nd ed., 1971, intro., vii-xiii. The phrase *fraša- kar-* is Gathic; but the compound *frašō.kərəti* (with *-ərət-* instead of *-š-*) belongs to a different dialect from that spoken by the prophet himself.
[18] Corbin, *Eranos-Jahrbuch* XX, 152.

There is no trace in Zoroaster's own utterances of any fixed chronology, or of any speculation about the world-age in which Frašō.kərəti will be brought to pass; but in the *Gāthās*, as in the Christian gospels, there is a sense of urgency, of the end of things being at hand. "An eschatological mood is prevalent ... On earth the horizon is not far off".[19] With this belief in an end to human history Zoroaster appears to have made another profound break with pagan ideas, whereby (to judge from the Vedas) the generations of men were seen as succeeding one another remorselessly like waves of the sea. The strong sense inculcated by Zoroaster of both time and purpose, of all mankind and all *spənta* being striving towards a common end, a foreseeable goal, has been held by some to be the most remarkable characteristic of his teachings.

The present struggle is a hard one, with each man's wise choice and actions being needed to sway it; but the issue to Zoroaster's mind was plainly not in doubt. Angra Mainyu and his legions are formidable and inflict harm generally, for even the man who is good by choice cannot escape cruelty and suffering at the hands of others, or afflictions such as famine, disease, bereavement and death. Yet in the end, the prophet was convinced, this dreadful power would be broken, defeated by the unity and positive force of the world of good. Zoroaster's radical dualism, of two separate principles from the beginning, thus ends with the destruction of the evil one, so that Ahura Mazdā will finally reign supreme, his sway at last undisputed. This is the goal "to which the whole of creation looks forward; it is regarded as being the inevitable consummation of a rational process initiated by God, and it is never supposed for one moment that there is any doubt that it will come to pass. The phrase used for this process is *paywandišn ī ō Frašegird*, which can be translated as the 'continuous evolution towards the Rehabilitation'".[20] This Rehabilitation or Making Wonderful is "the natural culmination of the fructifying power of the Good Religion; it is the triumph of the positive forces of physical life allied to a positive morality of justice, generosity, and concord, over the bleak negation of physical death and the chaotic forces of injustice, avarice, and discord ... The Good Religion can thus be seen as the religion of creative evolution, which culminates in ... the elimination of all that militates against life and happiness."[21]

Although Zoroaster yearns for this time to come, the *Gāthās* show nevertheless that his followers are faithful to his teachings when they seek

[19] Söderblom, *The Living God*, 218.
[20] Zaehner, *Dawn*, 308 (with changes in the transcription).
[21] Ibid., 296.

meanwhile to enjoy this world, in so far as it is Ahura Mazdā's creation. It was in the spirit of the old religion (as exemplified, for example, in *Yasna Haptaŋhāiti*) that the prophet asked of the Lord the joys of body as well as spirit: "To me who would approach you, O Mazdā Ahura, through Vohu Manah, grant the blessings of life, both that of material (existence) and that of the mind" (*Y.* 28.2). "All your things of the good life, which have been and are and are to be, O Mazdā, in your pleasure distribute them" (*Y.* 33.10). Yet even when he adapts what were probably old formulas for seeking the bounty of pagan gods, Zoroaster adds words which show that for him material possessions could be enjoyed only in association with the moral life, so that he asks for both "the rewards of wealth [and] the life of good intention (*rāyō aŝiŝ vaŋhāuŝ gaēm manaŋhō*)" (*Y.* 43.1), expecting that the faith revealed to him, which was "the best for beings" (*hātąm vahištā*),[22] would cause men doubly to prosper, bringing them "benefit" in both the corporeal and incorporeal states.

The Avestan word for "benefit", *savah*, is from the same verbal root as *saošyant*, a term of great importance in Zoroastrianism. In form *saošyant* is a future active participle, with the literal meaning therefore (when used as a substantive) of "he who will bring benefit", "future benefactor". Thrice in the *Gāthās* the word occurs in the singular, and in general it has been interpreted in these passages as being used obliquely by Zoroaster of himself. In *Y.* 48.9 it alternates in fact with expressions in the first person singular ("When shall I know (these things)?... May the Saošyant know how his reward shall be").[23] *Y.* 45.11 is an obscure verse for which a number of translations have been proposed;[24] but it contains a reference to the "religion of the Saošyant" (*saošyantō ... daēnā*),[25] a phrase which occurs again in *Y.* 53.2. This expression has generally been understood as meaning Zoroaster's own revelation, but Lommel thought[26] that in the latter passage at least the reference was rather to the teaching of a yet greater man whom the prophet expected to come after him to crown his work. Although there might not seem a very strong case for this interpretation of the text considered in isolation, yet it accords with the fact that down the ages Zoroastrians have nurtured a deep and ardent hope of a coming saviour. That this hope was engendered by the prophet himself seems almost certain, when one considers the depth of his faith, and that

[22] *Y.* 44.10.
[23] On this verse see Lommel, *Rel.*, 228.
[24] For references see B. Schlerath, *Avesta-Wörterbuch, Vorarbeiten* I, 80.
[25] Against attempts to interpret *daēnā* in other ways in this verse see Gershevitch, *JAOS* LXXIX, 1959, 199.
[26] *Rel.*, 229.

it must have been plain to him that Frašō.kərəti would not be achieved within his own lifetime. There seems indeed a direct reference to this hope in *Y.* 43.3, which in Lommel's translation runs: "And the man shall come who is better than a good man, who would teach us, for this physical existence and for that of the mind (= "spirit"), the straight paths of salvation ("benefit") to the true (real?) things with which Ahura Mazdā dwells—(a man) who is faithful (?), resembles you, O Mazdā, who possesses the right knowledge and is wise".[27]

From other verses of the *Gāthās* it appears that Zoroaster also used the word *saošyant* in the plural in a more general sense, for those coming after him who as good men and leaders of the people will help bring about Frašō.kərəti. "Then shall they be *saošyants* for the lands who through good intention (*vohu- manah-*), by actions in accord with righteousness (*aša-*), prepare the satisfaction of your teaching, O Mazdā, for they shall be the appointed opponents of Wrath" (*Y.* 48.12). "When, Mazdā, shall the dawns appear for the world's attaining of *aša-*, through the powerful doctrines, the wills of the *saošyants?*" (*Y.* 46.3). He further, it seems, with his sense of the closeness of the *gētīg* and *mēnōg* existences, thought of himself and other good men as still being *saošyants*, helpers in the struggle against evil, in the life after death. "May we", he prays, "be those who shall make it, the world, wonderful (*fraša-*)" (*Y.* 30.9). Down the generations his followers after him have prayed daily in the *yasna*: "May we become *saošyants*, may we be victorious, may we be beloved, helpful comrades of Ahura Mazdā, as just men, who think good thoughts, speak good words and do good deeds" (*Y.* 70.4). "As *saošyants*", they resolve, "we shall destroy the Drug" (*Y.* 61.5).

A complication in the linear interpretation of cosmic history, as evolving from the *mēnōg* to the *gētīg* and then, after corruption, being "made wonderful" again while still in the *gētīg* state, is that during the present time of Mixture individual souls are continually being forced, by the evil of death, to leave the *gētīg* and return again for a while to the *mēnōg* state. As they do so they are judged on what they have done in this life to aid Ahura Mazdā's cause, and a temporary place is assigned to them accordingly (for whether he chooses to act well or ill, man is the creature of Ahura Mazdā, to whose decree he must submit). This individual judgment anticipates the Last Judgment which all will undergo at Frašō.kərəti.[28]

[27] Lommel, *Rel.*, 228-9. The doctrine of the coming Saviour was subsequently developed in connection with the legendary life of the prophet, and will be considered accordingly in Ch. 11, below.
[28] For references to the secondary literature concerning the individual judgment see recently Ph. Gignoux, "L'enfer et le paradis d'après les sources pehlevies", *JA* 1968, 242 n. 1.

The pagan Iranians had presumably held, as did the Vedic Indians, that almost immediately after each blessed soul ascended to Paradise it was there re-united with its resurrected body, to live a happy life of full sensation.[29] But for Zoroaster complete happiness could come only with a return to the first *gētīg* condition, with the reunion, that is, of soul with body in a physical world restored to a flawless state. For him it was *this* earth, the world of the seven Bounteous Immortals, which, made wonderful again, would be the true Kingdom of God. According therefore to his teachings (as they reach us largely through the tradition) the redeemed will live in a *mēnōg* state, incorporeal, during the rest of the time of Mixture, to be united with their resurrected bodies only after the Last Judgment, when the earth shall render these up.[30] Later generations of Zoroaster's followers vexed their minds over this doctrine, for since "imperious Cæsar, dead and turned to clay, might stop a hole to keep the wind away", how could even God reassemble the scattered components of individual bodies, long ages after their dissolution? The theologians' answer was that to remake is easier than to make, and what God in his wisdom had done once he could do again.[31] In Zoroastrian doctrine the resurrected body is called the "future body" (Pahl. *tan ī pasēn*), an expression which may well have evolved to distinguish Zoroaster's teachings from pagan Iranian beliefs in this respect.[32] The doctrine of a future resurrection was sufficiently striking to be among the "Magian" beliefs recorded by Theopompus in the fourth century B.C., and to be repeated on his authority by other Greek writers.[33]

It is thus in spirit only that each individual receives his or her deserts immediately at death. In his teachings on this matter Zoroaster appears,

[29] See above, p. 110 ff.

[30] *Y.* 30.7 (on which see above, p. 206 n. 62); cf. *Vd.* 18.51. The same doctrine (with less apparent dogmatic justification) is found in both Christianity and Islam, and in both cases is widely thought to derive ultimately from Zoroastrianism.

[31] For the Pahlavi passages see Molé, *Culte*, 113-6; Zaehner, *Dawn*, 317.

[32] No Avestan term for the "future body" is known, and Zaehner (*Dawn*, 318) interpreted the Pahlavi expression as being linked with Zurvanism, since (he observed) "it can scarcely mean anything but the final and perfect form that the 'first body', the total cosmos or macrocosm, the 'body of Zurvān or finite time' takes on at the end of time when time itself merges into the Infinite". To the present writer this definition seems doubtful in the extreme. The expression *tan i pasēn* is used exclusively with reference to the individual and the hereafter, and belief in it was a required article of faith (as in Christianity), not a matter of theological speculation. See, e.g., Jamasp-Asana, *Pahlavi Texts*, 43.18-44.6: "I must have no doubt about . . the three nights' judgment, the resurrection, and the future body *(tan i pasēn)*".

[33] I.e. Diogenes Laertes and Aeneas of Gaza, see C. Clemen, *Fontes Historiae Religionis Persicae*, Bonn 1920, 75, 95; W. S. Fox and R. E. K. Pemberton, "Passages in Greek and Latin literatnre relating to Zoroaster and Zoroastrianism translated into English", *JCOI* 14, 1929, 81, 109.

characteristically, to have kept the beliefs of his forefathers while re-interpreting these in a way that filled them with moral significance. The old tenet, as we have seen, was apparently that those who had acquired merit in the sight of the gods (largely through keeping prescribed observances, and especially through sacrificing) could hope to ascend to heaven, crossing safely over the "Bridge of the Separator", the Činvatō Pərətu; whereas the undeserving fell from this bridge down into a nether world, to live there as hapless disembodied shades under the rule of the Lord of the dead.[34] Zoroaster taught instead that at the Bridge a strict moral judgment took place, in which favour bought of the gods had no part. Instead each man's thoughts and words and deeds, accumulated by him since he had reached maturity,[35] were carefully weighed in scales of hair's breadth precision. If those which were good outweighed the bad, he was saved, whereas if they were lighter he was doomed to the underworld, which for Zoroaster was a hell of torment, the "dwelling place of Worst Purpose (*Ačista- Manah-*)" (*Y.* 32.13), where the wicked shall all endure a "long age of misery, of darkness, ill food and crying of woe" (*Y.* 31.20). "Bliss shall depart from the right-despising wicked" (*Y.* 53.6). As for the man "whose false (things) and what are just balance" (*Y.* 33.1), who "makes his thought (now) better (now) worse" (*Y.* 48.4), for him Ahura Mazdā has appointed "a separate place at the last" (ibid). This is the *Misvan Gātu*, in Pahlavi the *Gyāg ī Hammistagān*, the "Place for the Mixed Ones",[36] which, like the old pagan kingdom of the dead, is an abode of shadows, a place of grey existence lacking both joy and sorrow.

The soul of a dead man departs this earth, in Zoroastrianism as in ancient tradition, at the end of the third day after death, just as dawn begins to show. It is met on its upward journey by a female figure, and if its late possessor has been righteous, *ašavan*, in this life, she is young and beautiful, and after the judgment of the scales she leads the soul rejoicing over the Bridge to Paradise; whereas if he has been wicked, *drəgvant*, she is a hideous hag, who clutches it in her horrid arms and plunges with it off the Bridge down into hell (the Bridge itself being held to be broad and safe for the virtuous, the width of nine spears, but contracting to the narrowness of a blade-edge for the damned).[37] This female figure comes

[34] See above, pp. 116-17.

[35] That is, the age of fifteen. In the tradition it is held that the actions of a child are partly or wholly the responsibility of its parents, and "go to the Bridge" to be weighed on their account, for good or ill.

[36] The term *Misvan Gātu* is known only from the Younger Avesta, see Bartholomae, *Air. Wb.* 1186-7. On the later elaboration of a threefold division of *Hammistagān*, to correspond with what was probably an old threefold division of heaven, see Gignoux, *JA* 1968, 226.

[37] *Dinkard* IX.19.3, ed. Sanjana, Vol. XVII, transl. West (as 20.3), *SBE* XXXVII, 210.

evidently from the pagan past[38] (when probably mortal women were not thought of as capable of attaining Paradise, whose pleasures in the Vedas are depicted solely for the delight of men); but the belief was accepted, it seems, by the prophet and harmonised with his own teachings, in that the beauty of this companion now depended solely on a man's moral endeavours. The term he used for her was Daēnā (Pahlavi Dēn), a name whose interpretation is complicated by the fact that there exists also the *yazatā* Daēnā "Religion". Almost all scholars agree that there are two common nouns *daēnā*,[39] both used by Zoroaster himself, and usually held to be distinct and possibly differently-accented derivatives from the same root, namely *dī* "see"; and the two divine beings seem to personify one or other of the concepts which these two words convey. Thus the Daēnā of the Činvat Bridge, it is suggested, is "she who sees or recognizes (the truth)", while the other Daēnā, "Religion" represents "that which is seen or recognized (as the truth)".[40] If this is so, both terms have moral implications, and perhaps therefore the first was deliberately adopted by the prophet as a specific ethical name for the previously amoral figure of the welcoming Maiden.[41] What complicates the matter is the varied use of Daēnā/*daēnā* in the *Gāthās*. In at least one passage the term appears to express exactly the idea conveyed by Pahlavi Dēn in the *Hadhōkht Nask*, being used of the Maiden whose appearance is moulded by a man himself during his own life.[42] Thus in the verse quoted above with reference to the *Misvan Gātu*, *Y.* 48.4, the prophet says: "he who makes better or worse his

[38] See Moulton, *EZ*, 165. The various passages concerning the Maiden at the bridge have been brought together by J. C. Pavry, *The Zoroastrian doctrine of a future life*, New York 1929, 28-48, M. Molé, "Daēnā, le pont Činvat et l'initiation dans le Mazdéisme", *RHR* CLVII, 1960, 155-85.

[39] There are of course exceptions. Thus Nyberg (*Rel.*, 114 ff.) held that there was only one word *daēnā*, which he rendered as "Schausinn" or "Schauseele": "Daēnā is at once the 'seeing sense' or 'seeing soul' set in each man, conceived as his religious organ, and the collective unity of all 'seeing ones', thus the fraternity of 'those who see', or the cult community, the religious society" (ibid., 118). Molé thought similarly that there was only one word *daēnā*, which he interpreted as meaning "religion conceived as the aggregate of rituals whose acceptance decided the posthumous fate of the soul and helped it to triumph at the judgment of the Činvat Bridge. This *daēnā* is not individual; but, for each man, she corresponds to the model to which he has conformed during his life, she also represents the community of the dead" (art. cit., 181). He accordingly translated all occurrences of *daēnā* as "religion", which in places seems decidedly forced. On the connection sought by a number of scholars between *daēnā* and Vedic *dhéna* see ibid., 182-5.

[40] See Lommel, *Rel.*, 150-1; cf. his *Yäšt's*, 103.

[41] Lommel, *Rel.*, 150 f., suggested that *daēnā* was a term coined by Zoroaster to replace *fravaši*, which does not occur in the *Gāthās*; and this was refined upon by Corbin, *Eranos-Jahrbuch* XXII, 1953, 142. who saw the *daēnā* as the development of "dualitude", as the *mēnōg* counterpart of the *gētig fravaši*, incorporated in the individual's body. This interpretation hardly satisfies, however, the various uses of the word in the Avesta.

[42] *Hadhōkht Nask*, II.22-32, see Asa and Haug, *The Book of Arda Viraf*, Bombay 1872, 284 ff., 311 ff.

thought, that one, by his deeds and words, (makes better or worse) his *daēnā*; she follows his leanings, wishes and likings".[43] Other passages can be interpreted as referring directly to the same conception, as for instance *Y.* 51.13: "So the Daēnā of the wicked man shall destroy for herself the assurance of the straight (path); his soul (*urvan-*) shall suffer ... at the Bridge of the Separator because of his deeds and because of having turned aside from the tongue's path of truth (*aša-*)." This can be understood as referring to the act of the spirit-hag, shaped by the sinner's deeds, in plunging off the Bridge with his soul, and so losing for both the way to Paradise. On the other hand, it is possible to take *daēnā* here as a parallel concept to *urvan* "soul", and to understand the words as meaning that both will passively endure punishment at the Bridge; for, as Humbach has demonstrated,[44] the two terms are often used together, and now one, now the other seems the active partner, and now both are passive, or active. Thus the *karapans* and *kavis* are among those "whom their own soul (*urvan-*) and *daēnā* (or Daēnā?) shall torture when they come to the Bridge of the Separator" (*Y.* 46.11). In *Y.* 31.11 Zoroaster says that "at first", that is, in the period of Creation, Ahura Mazdā made "material objects and *daēnās* and acts of will"; and sometimes he speaks of the *daēnā* as a part of a man's own being. "This doctrine do you proclaim to me, to (my) *daēnā*" he entreats Ahura Mazdā (*Y.* 46.7); and in *Y.* 49.4 he says that men of ill-will have established the false gods "by the *daēnā* of the wicked man (*drəgvant-*)". In another passage he declares: "He has been wicked (*drəgvant-*) who was very good to a wicked man, he just (*ašavan-*) to whom the just man was a friend, ever since you created the first *daēnās*, O Ahura" (*Y.* 46.6). On the basis of such occurrences the word has been defined as meaning "the sum of a man's religious and spiritual characteristics",[45] and variously translated as "conscience" or "self". Such renderings do not account, however, for the Daēnā of the Bridge; and it seems possible, therefore, that once again one has here the characteristic Old Iranian development of a thing (in this case a man's conscience, that faculty in him which should see and determine what is proper conduct), and a hypostasis or personification of this, shaped by the actions permitted by it, which Zoroaster identified with the pagan Maiden of the Bridge.[46] If this is so, it would seem that there are two pairs of Avestan words, namely *daēnā*/Daēnā "conscience/the Maiden of

[43] For this translation see Gershevitch, *JRAS* 1952, 177.

[44] *Die Gathas* I, 56-8.

[45] Bartholomae, *Air. Wb.* 666.

[46] See differently, but with the same postulated pattern of a hypostasis and a part of the terrestial being, Corbin, *Eranos-Jahrbuch* XX, 1951, 158.

the Bridge", and *daēnā*/Daēnā "religion/the *yazatā* Religion". In the tradition the hypostasis of the first pair is named only once, in the *Hadhōkht Nask*, being otherwise referred to simply as the Maiden (*kanīg* or *dukht*) or Woman (*zan*), probably by a tradition even older than Zoroaster's preaching. One of the inscriptions of the great priest Kirdēr shows that whatever expression was used, belief in this Daēnā continued to be a living one in Sasanian times, for he describes seeing in vision what appears to be his own Woman, leading his likeness by the hand safely across the Bridge.[47] The Sogdians of that period also knew the Maiden (*dwγth*), who is "a man's own action" (*γw γypδ 'krtyh*), and who conducts him to Paradise.[48] In the ancient *Yasna Haptaŋhāiti* (39.2) there occurs a striking instance of *daēnā* in what seems to be the sense of "conscience": "We worship the souls (*urvan-*) of the just, wherever born, men and women, whose better *daēnās* conquer or shall conquer or have conquered"; and in the Younger Avesta the word occurs several times either together with *urvan*, or with words for other divisions of a man's inner being, as for example, *Y.* 26.4: "We worship the life-force and *daēnā-* and power of perception and soul (*urvan-*) and *fravaši-* of the first teachers and the first hearers ... who have conquered for the right".

There is no evidence as to how the Činvatō Pərətu itself acquired its name—whether the Separator was originally water, or a chasm, or some power who waited there for souls to attempt the crossing.[49] In the *Gāthās* Sraoša is referred to, in association with Aši, as apportioning rewards and punishments (*Y.* 43.12);[50] but it is not said which divinity indicates "by the pointings of the hand" (*Y.* 34.4) the way which the soul is to take after its trial.[51] According to the tradition the judgment is carried out by a tribunal of three *yazatas*: Mithra, lord of the covenant, unswerving in his equity, presides over it, with Sraoša and Rašnu as his fellow judges. It is not unusual in Zoroastrianism for a lesser divinity to be named on occasion rather than a greater one, because he is felt to be more immediately

[47] See Ph. Gignoux, "L'inscription de Kartir à Sar Mašhad", *JA* 1968, 403 (ll. 42-3). In *GBd.* XXX.12-15 it is said that the righteous soul, going up to the Bridge, meets first the likeness of "a fat cow in full milk", then that of the Maiden, and thirdly the likeness of a fertile garden. These elaborations derive, it seems, from the Zoroastrian tendency to triplicate things, combined with a desire to embroider on the delights that await the *ašavan*.

[48] See Henning, "Sogdian Tales", *BSOAS* XI, 1945, 476-7. The passage concerned represents a Manichaean version of the Zoroastrian belief.

[49] See above, p. 117.

[50] See above, p. 226.

[51] There is no real gronnd for assuming (with Moulton, *EZ*, 169, and other scholars) that Ahura Mazdā himself was the judge at the Bridge. The place of the supreme God, in so far as any one place can be assigned to him, is on high in Paradise itself, and it is entry into his presence there which is the supreme moment for the blessed soul. (See *Hādhokht Nask* II.37, Asa-Haug, *AVN*, 292/314).

present, or more directly concerned with the worship being offered, or the activity described. (Thus, as we have seen, Nō Rōz, for instance, is dedicated to Rapithwina rather than to Aša, whom he aids.) It is perhaps therefore because Sraoša, protector of prayer, is immediately concerned with the *yasna*, which Mithra guards only remotely, that the prophet names him in *Y.* 43 rather than the presiding Ahura. Aši is not directly concerned with the judgment in the tradition, and in the *Gāthās* she is subordinated in this connection to Sraoša.[52] As for Rašnu, this *yazata*, as the hypostasis of judging,[53] was especially fitted for this function, and according to the tradition it is he who holds the scales in which good and evil are weighed (to which Zoroaster alludes in *Y.* 48.8).

In the scales of Rašnu, the tradition tells us, actions weigh most heavily, then words, then thoughts; but all three contribute to the total of man's good or evil achieved on earth—a noble ethic which is much emphasised in the *Gāthās*[54] and which, like the doctrine of the seven Aməša Spəntas, appears to have arisen directly from Zoroaster's meditations as a priest. (The Indian texts, and especially the Brāhmaṇas, show that for a pagan act of worship to be effective the priest was required to celebrate it with a right intention, with correctly-chosen words, and with precise rituals. If the act of worship were defective in any of these three elements, it would fail to reach the god to whom it was offered but would instead be appropriated by evil spirits.[55]) In Zoroaster's teaching the actions which "go to the Bridge" to weigh down Rašnu's scales on the side of good include the performance of religious services, with offerings and sacrifice. The merit of these is stored with that of other good deeds, words and intentions in Mazdā's "house" (*Y.* 49.10)[56]; and the soul of the happy man who during his lifetime has laid up enough such treasure in heaven will, having crossed the Bridge, mount upwards with his Daēnā to be received into the "Best Existence", into the "fair abode of Good Intention and Righteousness" (*Y.* 30.10). There "Mazdā Ahura ... will give perpetuity of communion with Haurvatāt and Amərətāt, with Aša and Khšathra and Vohu Manah" (*Y.* 31.21). It is striking that Ārmaiti, guardian of the earth, is not mentioned here or in other similar verses;[57] for she comes fully into her own only with Frašō.kərəti, when the kingdom of heaven will be established upon earth. It is for this wished-for time that "Devotion

[52] On the connection existing also between Rašnu and Aši see Gershevitch, *AHM*, 195.

[53] See above, p. 59.

[54] See Humbach, *Die Gathas* I, 55-6; Darmesteter, *Ormazd et Ahriman*, 8-13.

[55] For similar Iranian beliefs see above, pp. 170-71.

[56] On this verse see above pp. 219, 152.

[57] E.g. *Y.* 31.6.

(Ārmaiti-) makes undiminishing dominion (*khšathra-*) grow" (*Y.* 28.3).

The Gathic account of the end of the time of Mixture is again a matter of cryptic allusions. The tradition tells of a great battle in which the *yazatas*, strengthened by their own and by man's many minor victories, will meet the forces of evil in direct combat, with the Bounteous Immortals pitted against *daēvās* and demons, and will utterly defeat them. There appears to be an allusion to this in *Y.* 44.15, as the time "when the two armies meet";[58] and also perhaps in *Y.* 48.1, when the prophet speaks of how "at the accountings Aša shall overcome the Drug". His references to the last things are more clearly, however, to the final great ordeal by which evil will be purged from the world. This the tradition describes as submersion in a river of molten metal, to be undergone by the whole physical world and by all humanity, both those still living in the flesh and the greater host of the departed, gathered together again in *mēnōg* state from heaven and hell. "Then fire and Airyaman Yazad will melt the metal in the hills and mountains, and it will be upon this earth like a river. Then they will cause all men to pass through that molten metal ... And for him who is righteous, it will seem as if he is walking through warm milk; and for him who is wicked, it will seem as if he is walking in the flesh (*pad gētīg*) through molten metal".[59] So Zoroaster says: "What reward you will give to the two parties, O Mazdā, by your red fire, by the molten metal, give (us) a sign in (our) souls—the bringing of harm for the wicked man, benefit for the just" (*Y.* 51.9). The initiate, he declares, "the man who knows (*vīdvant-*)" will refrain from committing sins, "through eagerness (for that) which shall be proclaimed (as) prize ... by the glowing metal" (*Y.* 32.7); for it is after this ordeal that the final blessing is to be granted to the righteous, of the union of their souls with their resurrected bodies, so that they may enjoy peace and happiness forever on an earth restored to its primal state of good.

In the tradition as recorded in post-Sasanian times this doctrine of the ordeal is given a humane interpretation; for it is said that the fierce torment of the burning metal will finally purge away sin from the wicked, so that *all* men will then "be made clean" and will enter into the kingdom of God on earth.[60] There is little reason to suppose, however, that this was

[58] This passage may, however, be taken as referring to the contest of the "armies" of good and evil men in the present time, see Lommel, *Rel.*, 222, 227.

[59] *GBd.* XXXIV.18-19 (BTA, 289). On the part played by Airyaman, either as friend or healer, see above, pp. 56-7, and further below. In *Pahl. Riv. Dd.*, XLVIII.70 (ed. Dhabhar, 152) it is said to be Shahrevar who will "melt the metals of all the mountains".

[60] See *GBd.*, loc. cit.; *Dādestān ī dīnīg*, *Purs.* 36.110-1 (ed. Dhabhar, 106, transl. West, *SBE* XVIII, 115); *Saddar Bd.*, conclusion (ed. Dhabhar, 173-8, transl. Dhabhar, *Rivāyats*, 575-8).

the original doctrine taught by Zoroaster. As Lommel has pointed out,[61] an ordeal by molten metal was one which was in fact imposed by the Iranians of old, with liquified metal being poured on the breast of an accused person. If innocent, it was held, he would survive unscathed, if guilty, perish.[62] The miracle expected of the divine powers was that they would intervene to save the righteous man, not to rescue the wicked, thereby confounding justice.[63] This appears originally to have been the expected outcome of the last ordeal also, that it should finally distinguish between the *ašavans*, who would survive unhurt and rejoicing, and the *drəgvants*, who would perish in the fiery flood. Such is the doctrine presented in the Slavonic *Book of Enoch*, which is older than the final versions of any of the Pahlavi books, and which seems in this passage to be presenting an almost pure Zoroastrian doctrine:[64] "When all the creation that was created by the Lord will come to an end, and every man will go to the Great Judgment of the Lord, then the times will perish, there will not be any more years, or months, or days, the hours will not be counted any more, but the Aion will be one. And all the righteous that will escape the Great Judgment of the Lord will join the great Aion, and at the same time the Aion will join the righteous, and they will be eternal. And there will not be in them any more either labour or suffering, or sadness or the expectation of violence ... Happy are the righteous who will escape the Great Judgment". Similarly Lactantius, quoting the *Oracle of Hystaspes* and probably drawing therefore on an Iranian prophetic tradition of high antiquity, says:[65] "Hystaspes ... having described the iniquity of this last time, says that the pious and faithful, being separated from the wicked, will stretch forth their hands to heaven ... and will implore the protection of Jupiter [i.e. Ahura Mazdā]: that Jupiter will look to the earth, and hear the voices of men, and will destroy the wicked". Ahriman's own evil legions will, it seems, perish themselves in the last battle. Ahriman and his consort Āz, the spirit of Greed, will escape back to hell:[66] but "the

[61] *Rel.*, 219 ff.

[62] This is explicitly stated in *Šnš.* XV. 17, ed. Kotwal, 63 (see above, p. 35).

[63] It is noteworthy that in expounding the later teaching in the *Dd.* Manuščihr is forced to say in the cause of justice that although sinners will thus be finally saved, yet "the recompense of the souls of the rigbteous, [on account of] their greater justice and greater virtue, will be a better place and a higher position and more peace and joy" (*Dd.*, *Purs.* 36.16, ed. Dhabhar, 68).

[64] Ed. Vaillant, 62; transl. Pines, art. cit. (above, p. 230 n. 8), 78.

[65] *Divine Institutions*, VII.18; transl. W. Fletcher, *The works of Lactantius*, Edinburgh 1871, I, 468-9. On the antiquity of the Iranian tradition lying behind the *Oracle* see Benveniste, "Une apocalypse pehlevie ..", *RHR* CVI, 1932, 374-80; and for other works also apparently dependent on it, referring to the final destruction of sinners, see D. Winston, *History of Religions* V, 1966, 207 n. 64.

[66] *GBd.* 34.28, 30 (BTA, 292); cf. *Zand ī Vahman Yašt* VII.35 (ed. BTA, 67, 124).

molten metal will flow into hell, and that filth and corruption within the earth, where hell has been, will be burnt by that molten metal and become clean".[67] The metallic substance of the sky, Khšathra, will thus purify and redeem the beneficent earth, Ārmaiti, and all will again be purity and joy.

The stern doctrine of utter destruction for evildoers and evil, with salvation only for the good, accords with Zoroaster's noble anger against wickedness, and his passionate longing for a world that was wholly just. Its tolerant interpretation belongs to a more urbane and softer age. Yet, as Moulton has wisely remarked, Zoroaster "is not in the least bound to have been rigidly consistent—no eschatological system ever was or could be consistent and logical".[68] Thus the doctrine of the annihilation of sin and sinners leaves in question the fate of the middlingly bad, the dwellers in the *Misvan Gātu*; but even apart from such logical difficulties it is perfectly possible that the prophet himself modified some of his less essential teachings during the course of his long life (as other prophets of historical times, among them Mani and Muhammad, are known to have done thereafter).

Since the *yasna* with its rituals appears crucial to Zoroaster's thought, it is probably again part of his original doctrine that, just as the time of Creation began with the first "spiritual" *yasna*, so that of Mixture will end with the celebration of the last "spiritual" *yasna*, which according to the tradition will be solemnised by Ahura Mazdā himself or by his deputy (variously designated as Sraoša or the Saošyant).[69] At this service the last sacrifice will be duly made, that of the bull Hadhayans (even as the Uniquely-created Bull was the first creature to die at the beginning of the time of Mixture). All the righteous will partake of the *zaothra* from it and of the *parahaoma* prepared from the mythical "white *haoma*", and thereby their resurrected bodies will become as immortal as their souls. Presumably it is also through the offerings made to fire and water at this last divine service that the earth, already purged by the molten metal, will regain its original unchanging perfection. In the Zoroastrian religious year this coming state of bliss is prefigured annually in the celebrations of

[67] *GBd.* 34.31 (BTA, 291-3); cf. *Pahl. Riv. Dd.* L and XLVIII.86 (ed. Dhabhar, 162, 154). Also Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris*, Ch. 47, see Clemen 48, Fox and Pemberton 52, Moulton, *EZ*, 403. On the total annihilation of all evil from the universe see also *Dd. Purs.* 36.101-2 (ed. Dhabhar, 109, transl. West, *SBE* XVIII, 118). The fate of Ahriman has been considered by L. Casartelli, *The philosophy of the Mazdayasnian religion under the Sassanids*, transl. F. J. Jamasp Asa, 64-8; Zaehner, *Dawn*, 314-6.

[68] *EZ*, 157.

[69] On this last *yasna* see *GBd.* XXXIV.23 (BTA, 289-91); *Zādspram* XXXV.15-6 (ed. BTA, 153-4, cxxiv-v; transl. Molé, *Culte*, 93).

Nō Rōz, of which it has been justly said[70] that its purpose is "to return to the point of departure through eliminating the defilement which has accumulated during the past year. Nature is born again, but not only nature: men and their society share in her awakening. Defilement is shed, sins are expiated ... As a result the festival ... necessarily has a double aspect. In relation to the year which has just finished it constitutes a drawing to a close: it is "the end of time". In relation to that which is commencing it is a beginning: the day of creation, of the birth of the world ... The cosmogonic aspect and the eschatological one coexist and cannot be separated". Rapithwina, to whom the festival is immediately dedicated, is, as the divinity of noonday, the lord of ideal time, that of the perfect primeval state, of the completed resurrection, and of Frašō.kərəti; and each year when he returns to the earth in spring[71] this is a foreshadowing of the final triumph of good. As Zādspram says:[72] The making of *Frašegird* is like the year, in which at springtimes the trees have been made to blossom. ... Like the resurrection of the dead, new leaves are made to shoot from dry plants and trees, and springtimes are made to blossom." In the present ritual the *zaotar* (*zōt*) who celebrates the service of thanksgiving at Nō Rōz faces west. "For every other communal *jašn* ceremony the *zōt* faces east. The reason for the difference is perhaps this, that in facing east the priest honours the rising sun, which represents light springing up to fight against darkness and evil; whereas in the *jašn* of Rapithwin it is the time of light triumphant which is celebrated, when goodness will be fulfilled and at rest".[73]

The Last Time whose coming is thus annually foreshadowed is one when righteous men will become like the Immortals themselves, of one thought, word and deed, unageing, free from sickness, without corruption or decay. Thus they will experience perfect happiness in the restored world of Ahura Mazdā's creation, knowing once more the joys of the senses as well as those of mind and spirit, through the medium of their recovered bodies. (Whether the *mēnōg* gods themselves will also then take on *gētīg* form is nowhere discussed in the surviving texts.) The wheel will thus come full cycle, from the end of "Creation", when the *gētīg* world was made in its perfection, to the beginning of the Third Time, "Separation", when "limited time" will cease. Meanwhile all the sorrows and strivings of the present period of Mixture are necessary, so that Angra Mainyu may be

[70] Molé, *Numen* VIII, 58-9.

[71] The noontide *gāh* or division of the day, dedicated to Rapithwina, is not celebrated during the winter months, see in more detail in the following chapter.

[72] *Zādspram* XXXIV.0.27-8 (BTA, cxix, 142).

[73] Boyce, *Pratidānam, Studies presented to F. B. J. Kuiper*, 207.

destroyed, and evil ended for ever. Zoroaster thus saw a noble purpose for humanity, the dignity of a great aim to be pursued in alliance with God. He also offered men a reasoned explanation for all that they had to endure in this life, seeing this as affliction brought upon them by the Hostile Spirit, and not imputing to the Creator, who was to be worshipped, the sufferings of his creatures here below.

In one respect, however, the earth made wonderful at Frašō.kərəti will be different from the earth as it was first created, in that no return is prophesied to the original uniqueness of living things. Mountain and valley will give place once more to level plain; but whereas in the beginning there was one plant, one creature, one man, the rich variety and number that have since issued from these will remain for ever.[74] Similarly the many divine beings who proceeded from the one God will continue to have their separate existences. There is no suggestion of their re-absorption into the original Godhead, but they will walk for ever with perfect men in the perfect kingdom of God upon earth: "Then Ohrmazd and the Amahraspands and all *yazads* and men will be (together) in one place ... And it will be entirely the creation of Ohrmazd."[75]

Zoroaster's eschatological teachings, with the individual judgment, the resurrection of the body, the Last Judgment, and life everlasting, became profoundly familiar, through borrowings, to Jews, Christians and Muslims, and have exerted enormous influence on the lives and thoughts of men in many lands. Yet it was in the framework of his own faith that they attained their fullest logical coherence, for Zoroaster preached both the goodness of the physical world, and the unwavering impartiality of divine justice. According to him, salvation depended upon works alone, and there could be no intervention, whether compassionate or capricious, by an omnipotent Being to alter their consequence. With such doctrines, belief in the Last Judgment had its full awful significance. Yet though these doctrines acquired their ethical depth and logical cohesion in Zoroaster's revelation, separately they all derived, it seems, from elements in the old Ahuric religion which nurtured him, which was itself a faith of justice and morality, rooted in respect for *aša*.

[74] With regard to animals, however, some theologians evidently held that these "will merge, according to (their) lineage, into the Uniquely-created Bull"; whereas "those kinds of plants which are important . . will not decrease, but every place will resemble a garden in spring, in which there are all (kinds of) trees and flowers". (*Pahl. Riv. Dd.* XLVIII.103, 107, ed. Dhabhar, 158-9, transl. H. K. Mirza, London thesis, 1940).

[75] Ibid., XLVIII.99, 100 (Dhabhar, 157).

PART THREE

THE PREHISTORIC PERIOD OF THE FAITH

CHAPTER TEN

THE UNRECORDED CENTURIES

The early history of Zoroastrianism is wrapped in deep obscurity. Many generations must have lived and died before mention was made in any written record of the lands where Zoroaster taught; and knowledge of the faith's infancy, like knowledge of the prophet's own life, has to be gleaned therefore from meagre indications in the Avesta, amplified a little by the tradition. From these sources we learn that the anger which Zoroaster's own countrymen turned against him when he first preached was felt by neighbouring princes against Vīštāspa when he adopted the new doctrines, and that they took to the sword to convince him of error. The battles which followed must have been fought in Zoroaster's own lifetime (if the tradition of his longevity is to be trusted); and the allusions to them in the *yašts*[1] are amplified in the Pahlavi books and the Persian epic. There is also a Pahlavi fragment of epic verse, the *Ayādgār ī Zarērān*,[2] which celebrates the deeds of Zairivairi, Vīštāspa's brother and captain of his forces in the fighting against Arəjat.aspa, chief of the Hyaonas.[3] This prince appears to have been enraged at hearing of Vīštāspa's conversion, and according to the tradition[4] he sent messengers to demand that the *kavi* should abandon "the pure Mazdā-worshipping religion which he had received from Ohrmazd", and become once more "of the same religion" (*hamkēš*) as himself, since the new faith was a "great hurt and vexation" (*grān zyān ud duškhwārīh*).[5] On Vīštāspa's resolute refusal fighting followed, with great slaughter, but victory in the end for Vīštāspa. The *yašts* indicate struggles with other Iranian princes who were equally hostile to the new religion,[6] but the survival of Zoroastrianism attests the truth of the claim that Vīštāspa set his adopted faith "in the place of honour" among peoples[7] before his dynasty was somehow swept from power—for he himself seems the last of his line to have ruled.

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[1] See above, p. 188.
[2] Ed. Jamasp-Asana, *Pahlavi Texts*, 1-16; transcribed and translated by A. Pagliaro, *Il testo pahlavico Ayātkār-i-Zarērān*, Rome 1925.
[3] See *Yt*.9.30, 5.109. The prince figures in Pahlavi as Arjāsp. The Avesta records also the name of his brother, Vandarəmainiš, *Yt*. 5.116.
[4] Cf. *Dk*. VII.4.77, transl. West, *SBE* XLVII, 68-9.
[5] *Ayādgār ī Zarērān* §§ 10-11.
[6] See above, p. 188.
[7] *Yt*. 13. 100.

Other unknown princes must have protected the young religion after the downfall of the *kavis*; but the further slight references in the Avesta are to spreading Zoroaster's teachings not by the sword, but through missionary endeavour. Thus in a part of the *yasna* liturgy composed in the ancient Gathic dialect the words occur: "We reverence the return of the priests (*āthravan-*) who travel afar (to those) who seek Aša in (other) lands" (*Y.* 42.6). These "other" lands seem all to have been inhabited by Iranians, to judge from the *Farvardīn Yašt*, which preserves the names of a number of peoples and places where the faith was early received. In it (vv. 143-4) are praised the *fravašis* of righteous men and women not only among the Aryas (as the "Avestan" people evidently called themselves), but also among the Tūiryas, Sairimas, Sāinus and Dāhis; and the personal names, like those of the peoples, all seem Iranian in character. The *fravašis* are also honoured of individuals in the lands of Mužā, Raoždyā, Tanyā, Aŋhvī and Apakhšīrā. As has been said: "We suffer the torments of Tantalus with regard to these names, whose secret will probably always elude us".[8] One can only presume that they belonged to regions in the remote north-east, at some distant time in the prehistory of that area. The fact that individuals are named suggests that beyond Vīštāspa's own kingdom the new religion made its way at first only slowly, with the conversion of small groups here and there. Even were the region known at the time it might well, therefore, be difficult to trace the initial spread of Zoroastrianism through it. This is especially so since, although the prophet's teachings were in certain respects profoundly original, he nevertheless retained large elements of the old religion, including, it seems, the cult and most of the pantheon. For Iranian converts there was, therefore, no sharp and sudden plunge into a new culture, and little variation is accordingly to be expected in personal names, no striking change in outward worship, and small visible alteration in the way of life. These facts make the progress of Zoroastrianism against the pagan religion difficult to determine even in later historical times (as is shown by the controversy which has raged, despite the existence of written records, over whether or not the early Achaemenians had adopted the faith).

It is plain, however, that those who accepted the *maga*, the message preached by Zoroaster,[9] themselves felt this to be a decisive step which separated them effectively from the pagan community. From the *Gāthās*

[8] Nyberg, *Rel.*, 297. Eilers has sought an identification of Mužā with Skt. Mujavant, on the Indo-Iranian borders, on which see further Burrow, *JRAS* 1973, 138 n. 31.

[9] *Maga* is one of the problem-words of the *Gāthās*. For the above interpretation see (with references to earlier works and other renderings) E. Benveniste, *Les Mages dans l'Ancien Iran, Publications de la Société des Études Iraniennes*, No. 15, Paris 1938, 14 ff.; R. C. Zaehner, *BSOS* IX, 1937-39, 104; W. Eilers, *Abh. d. Akademie d. Wissenschaften und d. Literatur in Mainz*, 1953, Nr. 2, 74-7.

and the tradition it appears that it was open to any person of good will and understanding to become *magavan*, possessed of this gospel: that the prophet preached to women as well as men, to the poor and untaught as well as the wealthy and learned. "Zarathustra is not the spokesman of any individual class or group. As the one to whom Ahura Mazdā has granted insight in God's design of life, he wants to win his whole ... people for his message, thus leading all of them to salvation, *savah*, life in its abundant plenitude, as it was in the dawn of creation. When the Zarathustra legend exalts the Prophet as the first priest, the first warrior, and the first herdsman, i.e. the man who united all the functions of the tribe in his person, this is no doubt in good accordance with the central ideas in Zarathustra's religious teaching".[10] It may well be that in thus offering hope of salvation to every morally good person who accepted his teachings, Zoroaster broke with old aristocratic and priestly tradition, whereby the humblest members of the community were probably consigned, with women and slaves, to an after-life in the kingdom of shadows beneath the earth. If this is so, it gives force to the prophet's undertaking to bring all those who follow him to Heaven: "Man or woman ... whomever I shall impel to your invocation, with all these shall I cross the Bridge of the Separator" (*Y.* 46.10).

Such equity is likely in itself to have enraged the proud leaders of pagan society; but what was probably the most difficult point of Zoroaster's new doctrines for the people at large to accept was his utter rejection of the *daēvas*. He himself acknowledged the power and ubiquity of their wicked company, the *daēvatāt*; and he showed therefore the greatest courage, as well as the utmost faith in Ahura Mazdā, in defying them and denying them all worship. The same courage and faith was demanded by him of his followers. Before Zoroaster preached, such antagonism as existed between the adherents of *ahuras* and *daēvas* had probably not prevented the prudent man from offering sacrifices to both; but now if he wished to follow Zoroaster a convert had to cease such practices, and instead of placating divinities as potent as Indra, Nāŋhaithya or the fierce *Saurva, he had to risk drawing their active hostility upon himself by rejecting them in thought, word and act. There were, moreover, evidently considerable groups of men who did not merely seek to avoid the *daēvas*' anger, but were their convinced and loyal worshippers. In a passage from the life of the prophet preserved in the *Dīnkard* it is said that such Daē-

[10] Kaj Barr, *Studia Orientalia Ioanni Pedersen .. dicata*, Copenhagen 1953, 27.

vayasnians refused to abandon their gods because "When we crave of them lordship and leadership, they grant it us; when we crave richness in herds and wealth, they grant it us".[11] Their faith is castigated in the Pahlavi text as *jādūgīh*,[12] that is, control of the powers of darkness;[13] and it is said that they did not believe in moral rewards and punishments, which suggests that the Daēva-worshippers had the simple materialistic outlook of the Vedic devotee of Indra, seeking happiness here and hereafter through divine favours accorded him in direct return for his offerings.

The evidence of the Vedas and developments in Iran suggest that some opposition between the ethical Asuras and Indra was felt already in the Indo-Iranian period, and the times of the great migrations probably intensified awareness of this. There must have been different groups then among the invading Iranians, whose divergences seem reflected in the *Gāthās*: on the one hand tribes who moved steadily with their cattle, and fought only when it was necessary to gain what they wanted, namely good, safe pastures where they could settle and prosper; on the other warbands, unwilling to abandon strife even after new territories had been won, ruthless, predatory, delighting in combat for its own sake and for the booty it could bring. Such warriors were doubtless not above carrying off the cattle of fellow-Iranians when no other plunder offered; and they would naturally have worshipped the unscrupulous Indra, warlike and bountiful, whereas settled peoples were much more likely to have offered their heartfelt prayers to the Ahuras, guardians of order and peace. Indra-worshippers could thus properly be termed "non-herders among the herders",[14] robber-chieftains and their followers, who preyed upon pastoralists.

Such men would plainly have been hard to turn to the exclusive worship of the ethically demanding Ahura Mazdā and his *spənta* creation; and *daēva*-worship seems to have survived stubbornly in certain remote parts of Iran down to the Arab conquest.[15] With staunch commitment by such in the community, and natural caution presumably influencing many of the rest, it is small wonder that Zoroastrian missionaries had a hard initial struggle, and that they felt the need to demand repeated abjurations of the *daēvas* from those whom they succeeded in winning over. Such abjuration is accordingly uttered with great vigour in the ancient confession of the faith, in which, as has been pointed out, the term

[11] *DkM* 634.15-17; see Zaehner, *Zurvan*, 16 with n. 3.
[12] See *DkM*. 212.5-7; see Zaehner, *Zurvan*, 30.
[13] See above, p. 85.
[14] See above, p. 211.
[15] See Th. Nöldeke, *ARW* XVIII, 1915, 597-600; W. B. Henning, *BSOAS* XXVIII, 1965, 253-4.

vī.daēva "rejecting the *daēvas*" is a definition of religious belief of equal value with *mazdayasna* "Mazdā-worshipper" and *zarathuštri* "Zoroastrian".[16] This confession, known from its first word as the *Fravarānē* ("I profess"),[17] is still uttered daily in Zoroastrian prayer and worship. Although its language is characterised as pseudo-Gathic, the text itself gives an impression of high antiquity, with not only citations in it from the *Gāthās*, but also a significant use of Gathic imagery; and it seems possible that its kernel is in fact the original avowal made by converts in the early days of the faith,[18] but that, having evolved with the living tradition into a Younger Avestan form, it was later put back, with some errors and inconsistencies, into Gathic, as more fitting its venerable nature. Some extensions of the original text down the centuries are also very likely. In its existing form it is as follows:

Y. 12.1: "I profess myself a Mazdā-worshipper, a Zoroastrian, rejecting the *daēvas*, accepting the Ahuric doctrine; one who praises the Aməša Spəntas, who worships the Aməša Spəntas. To Ahura Mazdā, the good, rich in treasures, I ascribe all things good, 'those which are best indeed' [*Y* 47.5]—to the Righteous One, rich, glorious, whose is the Cow, whose is Aša, whose are the lights, 'may whose blessed realms be filled with lights' [*Y*. 31.7].

2: Bounteous Ārmaiti, the good, I choose for myself, let her be mine! I renounce the theft and carrying off of the Cow, and harm and destruction for Mazdā-worshipping homes.

3: To those with authority I shall grant movement at will and lodging at will, those who are upon this earth with (their) cattle.[19] With reverence for Aša, the offerings lifted up, that I avow: henceforth I shall not, in caring either for body or life,[20] bring harm or destruction on Mazdā-worshipping homes.

4: I forswear the company of the wicked *daēvas*, the not-good, lawless, evil-working, the most Drug-like of beings, the foulest of beings, the least good of beings—the company of *daēvas* and the followers of *daēvas*, of demons (*yātu-*)[21] and the followers of demons, of those who do harm to

[16] Benveniste, *Henning Mem. Vol.*, 41.
[17] The words with which it now begins, *nāismi daēvō*, are a late addition, see K. Hoffmann, *Henning Mem. Vol.*, 196-7.
[18] See Nyberg, *Rel.*, 274.
[19] This appears to be a symbolic reference to Zoroastrian believers, possibly to Zoroastrian missionaries, as possessed of "cattle" in the sense of good intention, of righteousness (see above, pp. 210-11).
[20] For this translation see Nyberg, *Rel.*, 457 on 185.1.
[21] It seems that *yātu* is used here in its early meaning of "evil supernatural being, a demon" (see above, p. 85), with *daēva* still in the sense of "false god".

any being by thoughts, words, deeds or outward signs. Truly I forswear the company of (all) this as belonging to the Drug, as defiant (of the good).[22]

5: Even as Ahura Mazdā taught Zoroaster in each instance,[23] at all deliberations, at all encounterings at which Mazdā and Zoroaster spoke together.

6: Even as Zoroaster forswore the company of *daēvas* in each instance, at all deliberations, at all encounterings at which Mazdā and Zoroaster spoke together, so I forswear, as Mazdā-worshipper and Zoroastrian, the company of *daēvas*, even as Zoroaster forswore it.

7: As (was) the choice of the Waters, the choice of the Plants, the choice of the beneficent Cow, the choice of Ahura Mazdā, who created the Cow, who (created) the just Man, as (was) the choice of Zoroaster, the choice of Kavi Vīštāspa, the choice of Frašaostra and Jāmāspa, the choice of each of the *saošyants*, bringing about reality, just—by that choice and by that doctrine am I a Mazdā-worshipper.

8: I profess myself a Mazdā-worshipper and a Zoroastrian, having pledged myself to and avowed the faith.
I pledge myself to the well-thought thought.
I pledge myself to the well-spoken word.
I pledge myself to the well-performed act.

9: I pledge myself to the Mazdā-worshipping religion, which throws off attacks, which causes weapons to be laid down, which upholds *khvaētvadatha*,[24] which is righteous, which of all (faiths) which are and shall be is the greatest, the best, the most beautiful, which is Ahuric, Zoroastrian. To Ahura Mazdā I ascribe all good.
This is the profession of the Mazdā-worshipping religion".

This ancient text has been characterised as "the oath which was required of someone being received into the faith",[25] and it is natural that what is stressed in it should be those elements which set the convert apart from unbelievers. The very first demand made upon him is that he should

[22] On *rąxšyant* see Gershevitch, *AHM*, 181 on 27.1; otherwise Nyberg, *Rel.*, 466 on 273.4.

[23] For this translation see Nyberg, *Rel.*, 466 on 273.5.

[24] The Avestan term *khvaētvadatha* was understood to mean "marriage between kin" by the Zoroastrians themselves down to the 18th century (see Vol. IV), and this meaning permits of a simple etymology: *khvaētu-* "one belonging to, related" and **vadatha* "marriage" *(vad-)*, see Bartholomae, *Air. Wb.* 1860. For the well-attested practice, and the literature concerning it, see Vol. II and III. The reference to it is undoubtedly oddly placed in para. 9 of the *Fravarānē*, which otherwise deals in noble general statements, as the climax to the confessional. The possibility that it is an interpolation cannot therefore be dismissed, though this only raises further problems.

[25] Nyberg, *Rel.*, 274.

avow his worship of Mazdā, and allegiance to his prophet, Zoroaster. Then he must declare his rejection of the *daēvas* and his acceptance of the Ahuric doctrines in general, and his veneration for all *spənta* divinities, for those, that is, who are beneficent, as distinct from the evil-working *daēvatāt*. Although much of the text is plain, parts have the allusiveness of the *Gāthās* themselves, and this suggests that converts were taught the basic Gathic doctrines in all their subtlety, for these words to have had meaning for them. Thus the complex Gathic imagery concerning the Cow is prominent; and the doctrine of the creations and their guardians is dealt with comprehensively but allusively, as in the *Gāthās*. Waters and plants, cattle and men, are named in due order in the seventh section; and sky is represented by the "blessed realms" above, which are Khšathra's domain, earth by its Aməša Spənta, Ārmaiti, the Devotion whom the new worshipper abundantly needs. Fire, too, is represented only by its protective divinity, Aša, and is nowhere explicitly named. Presumably since in its early forms (of veneration for the hearth fire) the fire cult was common to pagan and believer, the Zoroastrian missionaries felt no need to give it special emphasis, even though the prophet had endowed fire with new significance as the symbol of righteousness and general focus for prayer. Just as no fresh commitment was required from the convert over this, so too he was not asked to renounce any former ways of worship, but only to deny those beings to whom worship should not be offered. These facts bear out what can be deduced from the *Gāthās* themselves, that Zoroaster made few changes in the existing cult, being concerned rather to elevate its intention and to invest established rituals with deeper moral and spiritual significance. (There is nothing to suggest that practices which he repudiated, such as consuming an evil *mada*,[26] were rites connected with any particular group of gods. They may rather have been general abuses, or observances linked with black magic.)

Doctrinally what is perhaps most striking in the *Fravarānē* is its dualism. Ahura Mazdā, together with the Aməša Spəntas, is set in opposition to the *daēvatāt*; and all goodness (though not all power) is ascribed to the one, all evil to the other. It is understandable that in this text the opposition should be expressed in these terms, rather than as between Ahura Mazdā and Angra Mainyu, for (as far as is known) no one had been aware of the Hostile Spirit before Zoroaster preached, so that there was no ancient cult of the Evil One to abandon. It was rather those whom Zoroaster regarded as servants of evil, the venerated *daēvas*, whom the

[26] See above, pp. 216-17.

convert had to abjure. Although Ahura Mazdā's power is perceived as circumscribed by the existence of independent evil, nevertheless he is acknowledged as the Creator, who has made all beneficent creatures and man himself. The sense of cosmic history is moreover strong, for in uttering this profession of faith the convert speaks as one taking his rightful place in a chain of action which began with the waters when the world was formed. "The conversion of the initiate is conceived in true Gathic fashion as a choice of the better and a rejection of the worse way... He chooses the better way, as all good and life-furthering powers have done and do since the original creation".[27] Ethically, commitment is to Zoroaster's grand basic teaching of good thoughts, words and acts; and the convert acknowledges his prophet's claim to divine revelation and authority by the repeated references to the "encounterings at which Mazdā and Zoroaster spoke together", in which "Ahura Mazdā taught Zoroaster".

The *saošyants* mentioned in the past tense are presumably the wise and good, who have brought benefit to the world by following in the footsteps of the prophet; or, if they are the coming Saviours of developed Zoroastrian soteriology, then this must represent an addition to the original text, which seems to have been shaped in the religion's earliest days, when the young community was struggling against hostility and active persecution, with death threatening the faithful and destruction their homes. That Zoroastrians should have so suffered, except where they enjoyed royal favour, is no more remarkable than that the early Christians should have been persecuted, for the two faiths had evidently much in common in their missionary endeavours. Like Christianity, Zoroastrianism entered what appears to have been an easy-going, polytheistic society, with a claim to an exclusive revelation vouchsafed to its prophet by one supreme God, and with a demand for total commitment. It exacted courage and devotion; and it offered to all in return the hope of salvation after death, when unbelievers would be damned. Like primitive Christianity, Zoroastrianism evidently engendered a strong sense of brotherhood among the faithful, united as they were by belief and worship and a firm code of prescribed conduct; and such certainty and solidarity were no doubt as exasperating to pagan Iranians as to pagan Romans, and provoked correspondingly harsh measures of repression. What sharpened hostility to Zoroastrians was no doubt a sense of the rashness of their repudiation of the *daēvas*, an act which their pagan fellows may well have felt threatened to bring down the wrath of these gods upon the

[27] Nyberg, *Rel.*, 274-5.

people indiscriminately; and it was presumably a sense of the dangerous folly and presumption of the new faith which drove Vīstāšpa's neighbours to try to crush it by force before it could cause general calamity.

What is impossible to gauge is the reaction to Zoroaster's teachings of those who were already devoted to the *ahuras*, and who, without any great awe of the *daēvas* or eagerness to worship them, may yet have been reluctant to accept a doctrine of the absolute sovereignty of Ahura Mazdā. The Vedic evidence suggests that from Indo-Iranian times the Lord Wisdom had been venerated as the greatest of the *asuras*, solitary and very powerful, exalted over the mighty Mitra and Varuna. Nevertheless it may even so have been a difficult step to take, to acknowledge him as the one uncreated Being, Creator of all *yazatas*, the ultimate source of all good; and some who turned to the other *ahuras* for special favour and protection may perhaps have resented this vast claim, and have made common cause with *daēva*-worshippers and the generality in seeking to suppress the new religion. It is small wonder, then, that its early progress seems to have been difficult and slow.

There can be little doubt that the valiant convert to Zoroastrianism, his profession made, was required to adopt an outward sign of his new allegiance. The "Zoroastrian badge" which down the centuries has distinguished those of the Good Religion from all others is the sacred girdle (called in Avestan *yāh* or *aiwiyāŋhana*, in Persian *kustī*)[28] which every believer puts on on reaching maturity.[29] To wear such a cord as a sign of membership of the religious community was apparently an Indo-Iranian custom for men, for it is observed also by the Brahmans of India.[30] The Brahmans wear their cord over one shoulder: it is knotted initially by a priest, and never thereafter untied by the wearer, who merely slips it aside when this is ritually necessary. Zoroastrian usage is very different, and may well represent changes introduced by the prophet himself to set his followers apart, and to provide them with recurrent religious exercises (no less strenuous than those later enjoined, partly on the Zoroastrian model, by Muhammad). The Zoroastrian cord is worn as a girdle by men and women alike. It is very long, and is passed three times round the waist, being knotted behind and before with a fourfold knot. Even at

[28] Middle Persian *kustīg*. The word is of doubtful origin.

[29] That is, formerly, at the age of fifteen, see *Yt.* 8,13-14. This age has tended to be reduced, rather as the age of confirmation has been reduced in a number of Christian communities. For references to the later literature on the subject see Bartholomae, *Air. Wb.* 98, and add Modi, *CC*, 173-9.

[30] The Brahman cord is now made of cotton, the Zoroastrian one of lambswool, two materials readily obtainable in India and Iran respectively.

initiation the knots are tied by the candidate himself (the priest only guiding his hands), as if to mark that he now takes full responsibility for his own conduct upon himself; and every day thereafter, for the rest of his life, he must untie and retie the cord repeatedly with appropriate prayers, addressed to Ahura Mazdā. The symbolism of the *kustī* (which came to be complex) was evidently elaborated down the centuries;[31] but it is likely that the three coils were there from the beginning, exemplifying the threefold ethic of Zoroastrianism, and designed therefore to concentrate the wearer's thoughts on the practice of his faith, as the accompanying prayers express its basic beliefs. The Zoroastrian wears the *kustī* over an inner shirt of pure white, the *sudra*,[32] at the throat of which a tiny bag or purse is fashioned, to remind him that he should be continually filling its emptiness with good deeds; but how old this particular custom is there is no means of knowing. It is certainly a striking physical reminder of Zoroaster's moral demands.

The Zoroastrian prays standing and turned towards fire, as the prophet enjoined—whether the sun on high, or hearth fire, or at night sometimes a lamp. Probably already among the Indo-Iranians three moments of the day had been held significant for religious observances. Thus Zoroaster asks: "Who (is he) by whom (were made) dawn, noon and night, which (are) reminders to the discerning of duty?" (*Y.* 44.5). These three moments the pagan Iranians presumably regarded as creating the two "periods of the day" (Av. *asnya- ratu-*, Pahlavi *gāh*), which they called Hāvani and Uzayara, the "time of (*haoma*) pressing" and the "time of the day's outgoing", that is, forenoon and afternoon, each set under the care of one of the two lesser Ahuras, Mithra and *Vouruna Apąm Napāt[33]. Again it was probably Zoroaster himself, a priest concerned with observance, who created a third period, so that noon ceased to be merely a point between morning and afternoon, and itself became a three-hour *ratu*. During the auspicious season of summer, when the *spənta* powers are in the ascendant, this *ratu* is dedicated to Rapithwina, the spirit of noon (*rapithwā*), who is closely associated with Aša, lord of fire, and is

[31] The cord as worn since the oldest records about its nature exist, i.e. since Sasanian times, is woven of 72 threads (symbolising the 72 sections of the later *yasna*), which are divided into 3 groups of 24 threads (representing the 24 sections of the *Visperad*), and sub-divided into 6 groups of 12 (the 6 religious duties of the Zoroastrian, and the 12 months of the year), the final knotting together of all these threads representing the brotherhood of man. On these and other points, and for the Pahlavi literature, see Modi, op. cit., 175-6.

[32] See Modi, op. cit., 171-3.

[33] The ancient Indians made morning, midday and evening sacrifices, the "three hospitalities" offered to the gods (see *RV* 5.29.1, apud Thieme, *Mitra and Aryaman*, 78-9). On Uzayara embracing the whole afteruoon see Bartholomae, *Air. Wb.* 409 s.v.

himself lord of ideal time (for when the world was created, time stood still at noon); and so he is linked with hope of the end of limited time and the restoration of the ideal state.[34] For Zoroastrians summer lasts seven months, from Nō Rōz to the autumn festival of Ayāthrima, when cattle were driven home to their winter quarters. Thereafter during the five months of winter, the *daēva*-dominated season, Rapithwina retreats beneath the earth to cherish with his warmth the roots of plants and springs of water, so that the demons of frost and ice cannot destroy them utterly; and his time of day is then assigned to Mithra's care, being called, not Rapithwā, but Second Hāvani. There are thus three daylight *gāhs* throughout the Zoroastrian year, during each of which the faithful are required to say the *kustī* prayers with invocation of the protective divinity, who for Rapithwina's *gāh* is Aša Vahišta himself. So all through the long summer the thoughts of the devout should be turned at noon to *aša* and the work of Frašō.kərəti, while the withdrawal of Rapithwina in winter is an annual reminder of the menacing power of evil. As for the night, this was probably assigned in paganism entirely to the *fravašis*, as a time of dread; and again it is likely to have been Zoroaster himself who divided it into two, leaving the first half to the *fravašis* of the righteous, but assigning the second to Sraoša, lord of prayer;[35] and the strenuous practice was required of the faithful of praying twice during the hours of darkness, once in Aiwisrūthra, from the first glimmer of stars until midnight, and once during Ušah, from midnight until dawn.[36]

Zoroastrians thus had five daily times of prayer, instead of the three which may be presumed for pagan usage; and to observe them was obligatory, this being an essential part of what in Persian is called one's *bandagī* or "service" to God. Priests had in addition to solemnise the high rituals daily; and all members of the community, high and low, priest and lay, had the duty to join together to celebrate, seven times a year, the feasts of obligation, which according to the tradition were instituted by

[34] For reference to the later literature on Rapithwin see Boyce, *Pratidānam, Studies presented to F. B. J. Kuiper*, 201-4; and cf. above, pp. 224, 225.

[35] On the divisions of the Zoroastrian day, and the divinities guarding them, see, e.g., *Y.* 1.3 ff., 2.3 ff. et pass., *GBd.* III. 22 (BTA, 45); *Dk.* IX.9.7. (8.5) ed. Sanjana, XVII, 15, Madan, 793.13-15, transl. West, *SBE* XXXVII, 183-4.

[36] For the laity it was possible nevertheless to have an unbroken night's rest by saying the prayers of Aiwisrūthra before going to sleep, and those of Ušah on rising, just before dawn. (The Muslims followed the same practice when they adopted the five daily prayers from Zoroastrianism.) The word Ušah simply means "dawn", but Aiwisrūthra is of uncertain derivation. In later usage the names of the beings who personify the times of day were used for the *gāhs* themselves, so that the series came to be (in late Avestan and Middle Persian respectively) Hāvani/Hāvan, Rapithwina/Rapithwin, Uzayeirina/Uzērin, Aiwisrūthrima/Aiwisrūthrim, Ušahina/Ušahin.

the prophet. These feasts were all devoted to the Creator, Ahura Mazdā, and commemorated his seven acts of creation; and they must have been an admirable means both of fostering the corporate spirit of the community and of bringing home to all its members this fundamental doctrine of the faith. In general the prophet seems to have provided his followers with a strong framework for their devotional lives, to be filled by simple, significant observances through day and month and year; and it was this, clearly, which enabled his teachings to take firm hold among the common people, and to survive, virtually intact, down to modern times, despite external assaults, and periodic attempts by theologians at minor doctrinal compromises.[37]

We do not know what prayers the faithful recited in the early period for their *bandagī*, and indeed still today each Zoroastrian has a measure of freedom in this; but it seems probable that the first generations of believers simply used selected verses from the *Gāthās* themselves, together with several short *mąthras* in Gathic dialect, which constitute the great prayers of Zoroastrianism. The chief among these is the *Ahuna vairya*,[38] known in later times simply as the *Ahunvar*, "the most sacred and probably the most ancient of the Zoroastrian formulas of devotion." In the Younger Avesta it is said that, after he had brought the Amərša Spəntas into being, Ahura Mazdā himself uttered this prayer "before the creation of the sky, before the waters, before the earth, before the plants; before the creation of the four-legged cow, before the birth of the two-legged just man."[39] He taught it, it is declared, to Zoroaster's *fravaši*; and after he had been born into the physical world, the prophet taught it to men.[40] There is no reason to doubt that the prayer emanates from Zoroaster himself, for it appears closely linked with the *Gāthās*; but so baffling are the subtleties of the prophet's thought, and so intricate his use of language, that there is still no agreement about the precise meaning of this venerable utterance. The following is a conflation of four different recent renderings:[41] "He (Ahura Mazdā) is as much the desired Master (*ahu-*) as the Judge (*ratu-*), according to Aša. (He is) the doer of the acts

[37] One can see from Islam how the discipline of prayer, enforced daily throughout the community, buttresses faith; and the Arabian was undoubtedly wise to follow the Iranian prophet in this.

[38] Benveniste, "La prière Ahuna Vairya", *IIJ* I, 1957, 77.

[39] *Y.* 19.8-9. The doctrine of the creations recurs constantly in such ways throughout Zoroastrian scripture and exegesis. (In *Y.* 19.2 the seventh creation, fire, is also mentioned in this connection.)

[40] See *Y.* 19.1-2 and cf. *Y.* 9.14, *Yt.* 19.81.

[41] Benveniste, art. cit., 77-85 (with references to older discussions and interpretations); H. Humbach, "Das Ahuna-Vairya-Gebet", *MSS* XI, 1957, 67-84; J. Duchesne-Guillemin, "Exégèse de l'Ahuna Vairya", *IIJ* II, 1958, 66-71; I. Gershevitch, *AHM*, 328-9. See also

of good intention (*vohu- manah-*), of life. To Mazdā Ahura (is) the kingdom (*khšathra-*), whom they have established as pastor for the poor". The word rendered by "poor" is *drəgu*, the Avestan forerunner of Persian *darvīš*, which was used, it seems, in a special sense for "the true follower of the creed of the Prophet, the meek and pious man who stands firmly on the side of God and makes himself solely dependent on Him".[42] With its declaration of the power and will of Ahura Mazdā to aid the *drəgu*, the *Ahuna vairya* was not only a profession of faith but also a *mąthra* securing protection,[43] and it came to be regarded as the most powerful single weapon which there is against the forces of evil, being used by Zoroastrians in this way as the Lord's Prayer has often been used by Christians. It is the first prayer learnt by a Zoroastrian in childhood, and it remains his recourse throughout life, for because of its sanctity it may be spoken at need in place of every other form of devotion.[44]

Another great prayer in the Gathic dialect, which also is wholly Gathic in spirit, is the *Airyəmā išyō*, which is said to be the most triumphant of all prayers, for it will be spoken by the Saošyants at Frašō.kərəti.[45] When they utter it, "Angra Mainyu will hide himself beneath the earth, beneath the earth the demons will hide themselves. The dead will rise up, and within their revived bodies the breath of life will remain incorporate."[46] The exact translation of the *Airyəmā išyō* is inevitably disputed, but less than that of the *Ahuna vairya*. The following version (or its approximate) is fairly generally accepted: "May the longed-for Airyaman come to the help of the men and women of Zoroaster, to the help of (their) good intention (*vohu- manah-*). The conscience (*daēnā-*) which earns the desirable recompense, (for it) I ask the longed-for reward (*aši-*) of righteousness (*aša-*), which Ahura Mazdā will measure out."[47]

L. Gaal, "La formule Ahuna Vairya de l'Avesta", *Acta Orient. Hungarica* I, 1950/1, 80-92; W. Hinz, "Zum Ahuna-Vairya Gebet", *IIJ* IV, 1960, 154-9.

[42] K. Barr, "Avest. *drəgu-, driyu-*", *Studia Orientalia Ioanni Pedersen ... dicata*, 40. Barr's interpretation is strengthened by the evidence of Sogdian, in which language *drywšk-, jwxšq-* (< **driguška-*) means "disciple" (for references see Gershevitch, *A Grammar of Manichean Sogdian*, Oxford 1954, § 285).

[43] See Benveniste, art. cit., 85.

[44] See Modi, *CC*, 321-26, 449.

[45] Westergaard, *Fragment* 4.1, see Darmesteter, *ZA* III, 4-5 and further I, civ.

[46] *Fragment*, 4.3.

[47] This is basically Bartholomae's translation. Others have rendered the last verb, *masatā*, as "have in mind" instead of "measure out". The other main divergence arises from different interpretations of *daēnā*, see, e.g., Nyberg, *Rel.*, 271, Molé, *RHR* CLVII, 1960, 172. Although the prayer appears thoroughly Gathic in spirit and terminology, yet because it contains the name Airyaman, those scholars who uphold the strictly monotheistic theory with regard to Zoroaster's teachings are obliged to maintain that it already shows the beginnings of syncretism, whereas the *Ahuna vairya* is allowed to "reflect still the pure system of Zoroaster" (Duchesne-Guillemin, *La religion*, 218).

The brief *Ašəm vohū*, with which most Zoroastrian devotions end, seems to be a *mąthra* designed to concentrate the mind upon *aša*, and to invoke the aid of Aša Vahišta, the word or name occurring thrice within the twelve words of the prayer. Again translations vary widely. The following appears perhaps the least forced, although open to grammatical objections: "*Aša* (is) good, it is best. According to wish it is, according to wish *it shall be for us. *Aša* belongs to Aša Vahišta."[48]

The last of the great Zoroastrian prayers is the *Yeńhē hātąm*. This is a remodelling of the Gathic verse *Y.* 51.22, which in one translation runs:[49] "At whose sacrifice Ahura Mazdā knows the best for me according to righteousness. Those who were and are, those I shall worship by their names and shall approach with praise". The first line of the prophet's words, with "whose" in the singular, presumably refers to some particular divinity, to whom sacrifice has just been made; and this has been somewhat awkwardly altered in the prayer to give instead a wholly general application. Literally the *Yeńhē hātąm* runs: "At whose of-the-beings [masc.] and of whom [fem. pl.] therefore Ahura Mazdā knows the better for worship according to righteousness, those (male beings) and those (female ones) we shall worship". The intention evidently is to offer veneration to all those divinities who belong to the *spənta* creation, and whose worship is therefore proper for Zoroastrians. The *Yeńhē hātąm* "regularly concludes the litanies of the *yasna*, in which long series of gods are enumerated and praised";[50] and it is also often repeated in reciting the *yašts*, the hymns to individual gods. As has been observed, in uttering it the community praises all beneficent divinities "whatever their names and whoever they may be, so that none is named and none forgotten, as a prudent measure lest one god should be forgotten who is worthy of laud and praise and who would suffer if he did not receive it...".[51]

The *Yeńhē hātąm*, representing as it does an adaptation of a Gathic verse,[52] belongs, it seems, to a stage when Zoroaster's followers were

[48] With the emendation of *hyat* to **hyāt*. *Ahmāi* was taken by Bartholomae as the dat.pl. of a first person pronoun, although the use of *asti* is then admittedly awkward. For other renderings, with discussions, see Nyberg, *Rel.*, 269 with 466; Humbach, *Die Gathas* I, 30 n. 39; Gershevitch, *BSOAS* XXV, 1962, 369.

[49] That of W. B. Henning, see above, p. 218.

[50] Nyberg, *Rel.*, 270.

[51] Ibid. Although this interpretation appears to the present writer convincing, it is naturally not accepted by all Avestan scholars. Other recent ones have been based on Lommel's rendering of *Y.*51.22, which is less satisfactory, as to both grammar and sense, than Henning's. See, independently, Gershevitch, *AHM*, 163 ff.; Humbach, *Die Gathas* I, 49; and in detail, with references to earlier interpretations and a full discussion of the Pahlavi renderings, H.-P. Schmidt, "On the origin and tradition of the Avestan *yeńhē-hātąm prayer*", *Bulletin of the Deccan College Research Institute* XX, 1960, 324-44.

[52] Gershevitch (loc. cit., and further *JNES* XXIII, 1964, 17) took the *Yeńhē hātąm* itself

making liturgical developments. Apart from his own *Gāthās*, and the short *Ahuna vairya*, which could be used by even the humblest member of his community, Zoroaster does not seem to have created any fixed devotional utterances for his followers. Presumably he was content that, apart from using these *mąthras*, they should worship and pray with freshly-minted words, in the tradition of their forefathers. One of the earliest believers, it seems, shaped the *Airyəmā išyō* (unless this too was fashioned by the prophet himself);[53] and thereafter, at some later stage, the leaders of the community evidently decided to authorise a set liturgy to accompany the daily act of worship, the *yasna*. This seems to have been done at a time when the Gathic dialect was fading away—a development which may, indeed, have prompted their action, with the conviction arising that for this service, which embodied so much that was central to the prophet's thought, his followers should continue to use words as close as possible in form to those with which he himself had prayed. The result was the putting together of the "worship of seven chapters", *Yasna Haptaŋhāiti*.[54] This is a liturgy in seven short sections (one in verse), which probably represents a collection of what was remembered then in the Gathic dialect by old priests, who chose still to use ancient forms of words which their fathers had taught them; and it is hardly surprising if such works, garnered from traditionalists, should contain archaic matter, however well adapted to orthodox Zoroastrianism.

Originally the seven chapters were probably *mąthras* addressed in the main to the lesser *ahuras*, Mithra and *Vouruna Apąm Napāt, at the offerings to fire and water. In their existing form, however, neither of these divinities is invoked, but the whole liturgy is devoted to Ahura Mazdā; and the verse section contains a plea to him: "Keep thou in mind..." *mazdąm kərəš*,[55] which underlines, in antique fashion, the link between Lord Wisdom and the powers of thought.[56] Despite its ancient character, however, much of the text is informed by the spirit of the prophet's teachings. Thus its first words are: "O Ahura Mazdā, that would we choose for ourselves, that by beautiful Aša we may think and say and do

to be the utterance of Zoroaster, basing this on "the explicit statement at the beginning of the Homily on the *Yeńhē hātąm* prayer (*Y.* 21.1-2)", i.e. "(Homily) on the devotional utterance of righteous Zoroaster" *(yesnīm vačō ašaonō zarathuštrahe)*. This was undoubtedly how the prayer was regarded, and with reason, since it is so closely modelled on *Y.* 51.22; but it is impossible to ascribe the actual adaptation, with its syntactical awkwardness, to so inspired and skilled a *mąthran* as the prophet himself.

[53] On this possibility see below, p. 265.

[54] For the literature on this see above, p. 51, n. 190.

[55] *Y.* 40.1.

[56] See above, pp. 39-40.

such things as are best for both existences. With (desire for) the rewards for best actions we urge the taught and untaught, the rulers and the ruled to give peace and pasturage to the cow."[57] The last phrase seems to stem directly from a line in the *Gāthās*;[58] and there is strong emphasis in the liturgy on such Gathic concepts as *aša* in association with *khšathra*, the kingdom of heaven to be won here on earth. "For you" (declare the worshippers to Ahura Mazdā) "we would accomplish and we would teach as well as we are able. For the sake of Aša and Vohu Manah and Vohu Khšathra, O Ahura, (we offer) praises upon praises, words upon words, sacrifices upon sacrifices."[59] "Thus then we worship Ahura Mazdā, who created cattle and order (*aša-*), created waters and good plants, created light and earth and all things good by his dominion (*khšathra-*) and greatness and good acts. Him then we worship with the best of sacrifices, (we) who abide with the cow."[60] In this liturgy, moreover, we encounter for the first time the expression "Bounteous Immortals", Aməša Spəntas, that characteristic Zoroastrian phrase that excludes the *daēvas* from worship:[61] "So then we worship the good beings, male and female, the Bounteous Immortals, ever-living, ever-benefiting, who hold by good purpose (*vohu- manah-*)."[62] Veneration is also offered to "the *fravašis* of the just, men and women",[63] and the inclusion of the latter may well be, as we have seen, also specifically Zoroastrian.

The offering to fire was made of old during the recitation of *Yasna Haptaŋhāiti*,[64] probably after *Y.* 36, which is devoted to the invocation and praise of fire; and the offering to water probably at the end of the liturgy, whose second part is devoted to the waters. The *zaothra* to fire was the central point of the act of worship, and so was fittingly made half-way through the service, in order to be fully shielded by the protective words.[65] The *Yasna Haptaŋhāiti* itself was now made, however, the centre of a longer liturgy of purely Gathic texts. There is a brief appendix in this dialect to the "seven chapters",[66] a curious little text which honours the *Yasna Haptaŋhāiti* itself, and also springs and water-courses, paths and mountains, earth and heaven, wind, fabulous creatures, *haoma*, and the

[57] *Y.* 35.3-4.
[58] i.e. *Y.* 47.3, see Benveniste, *Les infinitifs avestiques*, Paris 1935, 84.
[59] *Y.* 35.7-8. It is notable that Khšathra has not at this stage acquired *vairya* as a fixed epithet.
[60] *Y.* 37.1-2. On these lines see above, p. 142.
[61] See above, p. 197.
[62] *Y.* 39.3.
[63] *Y.* 37.3.
[64] See above, pp. 51, 165.
[65] On this use of *mąthras* see above, p. 165.
[66] *Y.* 42.

return of missionary priests. Otherwise it is the great Gathic utterances which were used. Each section of the *Yasna Haptaŋhāiti* concludes with the *Yeŋhē hātąm*, which ensures that all the Aməša Spəntas are thereby invoked; and then the whole is framed by Zoroaster's own *Gāthās*, used simply liturgically, not as words to accompany ritual acts.[67] The *Gāthās* are arranged in groups according to metre; and in the terminology of the Zoroastrians themselves, each group forms a single *Gāthā*, so that there are five *Gāthās* in all. The first group is by far the longest, and this was set before the "seven chapters"; all the other four were placed after them. Then the *Gāthās* themselves were protected by the other Gathic *mąthras*, that is, the short prayers. Before the first group the *Ahuna vairya* is recited, followed by *Ašəm vohū*, and *Yeŋhē hātąm*; and these are repeated after each of the seven separate hymns which make up the *Gāthā* (the *Ahuna vairya* itself four times, the other two respectively thrice and once). This first *Gāthā* is accordingly known as *Gāthā Ahunavaitī* "The *Gāthā* possessing the *Ahuna vairya*". This greatest of prayers is not recited with any of the other four *Gāthās*, which are all named from their own opening words. The lesser *Yeŋhē hātąm* and *Ašəm vohū* are recited after every section of all the *Gāthās*; and at the end of the fifth *Gāthā* is placed protectively the other great prayer, the *Airyəmā išyō*, again followed by *Ašəm vohū* and *Yeŋhē hātąm*. (It thus comes about that *Y.* 53, the "Wedding *Gāthā*", which in part celebrates the nuptials of Zoroaster's daughter Pouručistā, is directly followed by the prayer to Airyaman, *yazata* of marriage,[68] and this increases the possibility that this prayer was in fact composed by the prophet himself.) It is probably this group of Gathic texts, from the first *Ahuna vairya* to the *Airyəmā išyō*, which made up the original *Staota yesnya* "Words of praise and worship",[69] constituting the first fixed liturgy of the faith. The *Gāthās* themselves had evidently been exactly memorised from the beginning; and now, framed by them, the *Yasna Haptaŋhāiti* also took on immutable form, whereas the *Hōm Yašt*, accompanying what at this stage was apparently still a separate rite, continued in fluid transmission, composed afresh by each generation, so that, despite the high antiquity of its subject matter, it survives only in Younger Avestan form.[70] None of this development can be even ap-

[67] This statement is based on the fact that in known Zoroastrian usage (of the Sasanian period onwards) virtually no ritual is performed during the recital of the *Gāthās*.
[68] On this aspect of Airyaman see above, p. 56.
[69] The *Staota yesnya* or *Stōt Yašt* is a term applied to the central part of the extended *yasna* liturgy, although later definitions vary slightly as to just where it begins and ends. See Darmesteter, *ZA* I, lxxxvii; Bartholomae, *Air. Wb.* 1589; Geldner, *GIP* II, 25-6.
[70] See above, p. 158 f., and further in Vol. II.

proximately dated; for we know neither when Gathic Avestan was spoken, nor how long it took to evolve into the Younger Avestan of the great *yašts*. There is no evidence either as to when the ritual and liturgy of the Zoroastrian *yasna* was extended to absorb the separate *haoma* rite and to include many Younger Avestan texts, whereby the Gathic *Staota yesnya* came to stand at the centre of an extended liturgy of 72 chapters. The nature of the additional *yasna* texts makes it probable, however, that these latter developments did not take place before the historical period—perhaps in part as late as Sasanian times.

For the prehistoric period there is no information at all about the ecclesiastical organisation of Zoroastrianism—whether there was a single recognized head of the community, considered as successor of the prophet, or whether a presbyterian system of church government prevailed. A scrap of evidence is, however, vouchsafed by the Avesta about the pursuit of religious learning; for in the *Farvardīn Yašt* Saēna, son of Ahūm.stūt, is honoured as the first among the faithful to have had a hundred pupils.[71] This must have been a large group for ancient days, when all knowledge was transmitted orally; and it indicates not only Saēna's eminence as a teacher, but also the growing size of the community—a fact which would be more significant if one could determine when he flourished. The name Ahūm.stūt has been interpreted as "He who prays the *ahū*", that is, the *Yathā ahū vairyō* or *Ahunvar*;[72] and this suggests that Saēna's grandparents were already devout Zoroastrians, so that he himself should have lived at least two generations after the prophet.[73] It must have been Saēna and other forgotten scholars of these dark centuries who gradually shaped the secondary religious literature of the faith (represented by the oldest parts of the Younger Avesta), and continued to develop its theology. Zoroaster had shattered old patterns of belief, not only by rejecting the *daēvas* but also by preaching that Ahura Mazdā was Creator and absolute Lord of all *spənta* divine beings, and by revealing the existence of the six great Bounteous Immortals. New relationships had therefore to be worked out for the Zoroastrian pantheon; and for studying these a rule applies which is valid for polytheisms, even though Zoroastrianism is not polytheistic in any ordinary sense: that no divinity should be considered in isolation, for to do so is to dismember a coherent system and break it

[71] *Yt.* 13.97. On Saēna and the literature concerning him see O. G. von Wesendonk, *Die religionsgeschichtliche Bedeutung des Yasna Haptaŋhāti*, Bonn-Köln 1931, 1.

[72] See Bartholomae, *Air. Wb.* 285, and further von Wesendonk, loc. cit. A proper name Ašəm.stūt also occurs, interpreted as "He who prays the *ašəm (vohū)*."

[73] Unless of course Ahūm.stūt was a convert, who himself took this name on entering the faith.

misleadingly into parts, a process whereby each part also loses a large measure of its own significance.

At the heart of Zoroaster's divine system is of course Ahura Mazdā, and close to him the six Aməša Spəntas, who, as the first-created, shared in his fashioning of the other *spənta* beings. Around them are grouped these lesser *yazatas*, knowing no rivalry or emulation, but aiding one another, as they are ready to aid mankind, in order to achieve the one great aim of conquering evil. In Persian terminology they are all *hamkārs*, fellow-workers, with the six; and the complex patterns of their relationships, evolved doubtless gradually in priestly schools, are set out in detail in the Pahlavi books.[74] To take some clear, uncomplicated examples, Vohu Manah, as guardian of cattle, has as his *hamkārs* the Moon-*yazata*, Māh (since the moon keeps the seed of the Uniquely-created Bull), and also Gəuš Urvan. The *yazata* of Fire naturally helps Aša Vahišta, as does Rapithwina, the spirit of noon. Khšathra Vairya, lord of the sky, has for his associates Hvar, the sun-*yazata*, and the spirit of the sky itself, Asmān, the Endless Light of Paradise, Anaghra Raocå, and also great Mithra. For the needs of the earth Spənta Ārmaiti receives help from the Waters, Āpas, and the divinities of water, Arədvī Sūrā and the "high Lord", *Vouruna Apąm Napāt. Haurvatāt, caring for water itself, has for *hamkārs* Tištrya and Vāta, who bring rain, and the *fravašis*, who distribute it; and Amərətāt, guardian of plants, is helped by Zam, *yazatā* of the earth. As this selective summary shows, some of the divine beings themselves personify what one or other of the six Aməša Spəntas protects, and this makes the pantheon a complex one, full of criss-crossing webs of alliance and interdependence. Yet though this is difficult for alien understandings, it can have created no stumbling block for Iranian converts, to whom such relationships were familiar already from pagan days. Thus, to take one example, Mithra had formerly been venerated as lord of fire and of its great representative the sun, although both fire and sun were themselves personified as divinities. In his case there was probably now a special development, in that Zoroaster regarded fire (which through Mithra had been seen as the instrument of *aša*) as the creation of Aša; and so in Zoroastrianism it was Mithra's link with the sun which was chiefly emphasized. He was therefore hailed as *hamkār* of Khšathra on high, together with Hvar, rather than of Aša and Ātar here below. This link continued, moreover, the ancient partnership of the two lesser Ahuras, since *Vouruna as lord of water aids Ārmaiti, who is Khšathra's own constant associate.

[74] Notably *Greater Bundahišn* XXVI (BTA, 211-33).

Though the *yazatas* came to be grouped as *hamkārs*, they were still defined by their own separate functions, which created their essential being. Thus though Mithra aided Khšathra, he did so without resigning his own especial role as personification of the covenant, with its many ramifications; and Vərəthraghna, Victory, now became "standard-bearer" for all other *yazatas*,[75] carrying their flag, metaphorically, in the battle against wrong. His task was to ensure victory for the Zoroastrian faith, and hence for goodness; and the most exalted of the temple fires were later to be called by his name. What helped to keep the concept of each *yazata* sharply distinct, despite their close association, was the existence still of separate hymns in honour of each. There was no reason to neglect the panegyrics of beings acknowledged as *spənta*, whom to praise and worship was in itself a valuable activity; and little in the *yašts* seems to have needed change to fit them for Zoroastrian worship.[76] Specifically Zoroastrian elements were naturally added, however, to adapt them to the new theology. The names of Ahura Mazdā and his prophet occur frequently, and half the existing *yašts* begin with one of two formulas: either "Ahura Mazdā said to Zarathuštra" (*mraoṯ ahurō mazdå spitamāi zarathuštrāi*)[77] or "Zarathuštra asked Ahura Mazdā" (*pərəsaṯ zarathuštrō ahurəm mazdąm*).[78] By this means each hymn is presented as having been revealed to the prophet. The vocative "O Spitama Zarathuštra" is also often introduced in the body of the work to emphasize this.[79] Sometimes an explicitly Zoroastrian element is more closely interwoven, as in the following verse: "Tištrya ... whom Ahura Mazdā created lord and overseer of all stars, as Zoroaster of men";[80] and occasionally a specifically Zoroastrian doctrine informs the text, harmonising so closely, however, with older pagan concepts that it is impossible to pull the strands apart. Perhaps the most interesting of the *yašts* from this point of view is that in honour of the *fravašis*: probably already in the pagan period beliefs about the *fravašis* had become linked with the cosmogonic theories which

[75] Ibid. XXVI.56 (BTA, 221).

[76] Such a statement is necessarily based on deduction, not evidence, since no independent pagan texts survive. There are, however, some very archaic passages in the *yašts*, which cannot have originated under Zoroastrianism, but must have been preserved from an older time—much as, the Jews having preserved very ancient material in their scriptures, this came to be adopted and venerated by Christians also, without regard for certain incompatibilities.

[77] *Yt.* 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 13, 18.

[78] *Yt.* 1, 12, 14.

[79] In the sixth section, e.g., of *Yt.* 8 (vv. 10-34) it occurs, sometimes more than once, in vv. 13, 16, 18, 20, 22, 26, 30, 32, 34. The fact that the invocation forms metrically a characteristic *yašt* verse-line makes its interpolation a simple matter.

[80] *Yt.* 8.44.

underlie Zoroaster's own doctrines about the creations, and so these particular doctrines were readily incorporated in their *yašt*, to be followed by references to the two Spirits and the part played by the *fravašis* themselves in the struggle between good and evil. The following are among the most striking verses (presented as usual as the utterance of Ahura Mazdā): "If the mighty *fravašis* of the just had not given me aid... to the Drug would have been the power, to the Drug the rule, to the Drug corporeal life. Of the two Spirits the Drug would have sat down between earth and heaven; of the two Spirits the Drug would have conquered between earth and heaven. Afterwards the conqueror would not have yielded to the conquered, Aŋra Mainyu to Spənta Mainyu".[81]

This passage exemplifies the collegiality which Zoroastrian theologians attributed to the *yazatas*. All *spənta* divinities, having been created by Ahura Mazdā, enjoyed independent existence, but used it striving for that end for which he had given it to them, and so afforded him powerful help. This is orthodox doctrine. There are, however, some evidently late verses in a few of the *yašts* which carry this concept beyond what seems theologically sound. Two of these are modelled on older ones which depict kings and heroes sacrificing to individual *yazatas* in order to receive specific favours; and the imitative verses represent Ahura Mazdā himself acting in the same way. Thus in *Yašt* 5 (vv. 17-18) it is said that for Arədvī Sūrā "the Creator Ahura Mazdā sacrificed in Airyanəm Vaēǰah of the good Dāityā, with *haoma*-, corn, flesh,[82] with *barəsman*-, with skill of tongue ... Then he asked her: 'Grant me this boon, O good, most mighty Arədvī Sūrā Anāhitā, that I may persuade the son of Pourušaspa, the just Zarathuštra, to think according to the religion, to speak according to the religion, to act according to the religion'". These verses are modelled on others in the same *yašt* (vv. 104-5), where Zoroaster, coming at the end of a long line of pagan heroes, is represented as sacrificing in this way, and as asking, in precisely these terms, that he "may persuade the son of Aurvat.

[81] *Yt.* 13.12-13.

[82] This is a recurrent formula used of priestly rituals, and has been much discussed. The Av. phrase is *haomayō gava*, which, it is generally agreed, must be slightly corrupt. Thieme (*ZDMG* 1957, 75 ff.) proposed emending to *haoma *yaogava* "barley-milk with *haoma*", but, as Gershevitch pointed out (*AHM*, 322), this does not correspond with any known ritual offering. He himself (ibid., 163) interpreted the two words as representing properly a compound, **haomayō.gava* "with *haoma*-ish milk = milk with an admixture of *haoma*"; but *haoma* is not ritually subordinated to milk, rather the contrary. Hoffmann, *MSS* 8, 1956, 23, suggested reading *haoma yō gava* "with *haoma* which (is) [mixed] with milk"; and Henning (verbally, in 1959) emended to *haoma *yava gava* "with *haoma*, corn, milk". If one takes *gava* in the sense of "flesh" instead of "milk", this in fact describes the offerings of the *yasna*, i.e. the *parahaoma*, *draonah* (or cake of unleavened bread), and *zaothra* to fire.

aspa, the mighty Kavi Vīštāspa" to accept the faith. Then in *Yašt* 15 the Creator is shown (vv. 2-3) as asking of Vayu the boon "that I may smite down the creation of Aŋra Mainyu, but by no means that of Spənta Mainyu". Even apart from the naivety of the content, the shaky grammar of the Avestan marks this as late. In *Yašt* 8 (v. 25) Ahura Mazdā is represented as responding to Tištrya's plea for worship, and through worship, strength, by sacrificing to him himself, thus setting an example for men to follow; and in *Yašt* 10 (v. 123) it is briefly said that the Creator sacrificed for Mithra "in the bright House of Song", that is, in Paradise. Much has been made of these passages by some Western scholars, as yielding proof of heterodoxy, of battles of allegiance waged and won, for instance, by putative devotees of Vayu, who thus managed to set their defiant stamp on a Zoroastrian text;[83] but though the verses would doubtless have incurred the censure of the prophet, there seems no need to refine on them to this extent. They appear inept rather than malignant, and to be born of a tendency inherited from Indo-Iranian times. This has been defined as "kathenotheism", that is "a theism which attributes the totality of cosmic and divine functions to various deities in turn (*kathenos*). This kathenotheism is, as it were, a time-restricted monism".[84] Such a tendency, deeply ingrained, and still in a measure fostered by the *yašts*, was evidently not immediately eradicated by Zoroaster's teachings. The *yazata* to whom praise was being offered was still to some extent for the worshipper at that moment a being to be exalted above all others; and for a Zoroastrian there could be no more impressive way to laud any divinity than to represent him as being honoured by Ahura Mazdā himself, no better means of inculcating his worship than to state that the example for it had been set by the Creator. Hence, doubtless, these irregular passages, in which, however, it is plain that no blasphemy was intended, but only exaggerated praise of the lesser *yazata*. The general character of these various hymns, and their place in Zoroastrian worship, are sufficient warranty of this. It must also be borne in mind that the *yašts* are hymns, which were chanted by private individuals or their family priests, but had no place in the "inner" worship of the *pāvi*.[85] It is not difficult to find utterances that seem heretical in Christian hymns, which are not scanned for error in the manner of authorised liturgical texts.

The verses which we have just been considering do not in fact rightly

[83] See Wikander, *Vayu*, 48-50.

[84] B. Heimann, *Indian and Western Philosophy*, London 1937, 35. The term itself was coined by Max Müller with reference primarily to Vedic religion.

[85] On these terms see above, pp. 166-7, 168.

belong to this present chapter, since they are plainly late compositions; but they serve to illustrate the difficulty of using a fluid oral literature to trace theological or other developments, for such a literature, composed afresh in each generation, can all too readily absorb new elements without showing any signs of interpolation. Plagiarism is no fault, and (as we have seen earlier with the *yašts* of Aši and Arədvī Sūrā) it is not always easy to establish which is a dependent text, which the original. This is not a problem in the case of the long hymn to Sraoša, which exists as part of the extended *yasna* liturgy (*Y.* 57), and is unquestionably modelled on the *Mihr Yašt*. What is impossible to determine in this case is when the cult of Sraoša became so important that it demanded such a hymn in his honour. The *yazata* is a Gathic figure, and the prophet invokes him impressively as "greatest of all (*vīspā.mazištəm*)" (*Y.* 33.5)—most probably because of the immense power of prayer. This thought seems to have been developed by Zoroastrian theologians, and gradually, as the difficult concept of Spənta Mainyu became absorbed in that of the Creator himself (for which again there is precedent in the *Gāthās*), Sraoša took over his function as protector of man, and was hailed as Ahura Mazdā's vice-regent here on earth. In living Zoroastrianism he receives accordingly more devotions than any other *yazata*. It is likely, however, that this was a gradual development, and full consideration of it will be left therefore to a later volume.

Contemplation of the divinity of prayer leads us to that of a group of prayers, called in Persian *niyāyeš*, which must in their oldest form belong to the early days of Zoroastrianism. These are still recited, either daily or when appropriate, among the private devotions of the faithful. There are five of them, which are set always in the following order:[86] firstly the *Khoršēd Niyāyeš* in honour of the sun, to be recited thrice a day, during the prayers of the daytime *gāhs*. This is never said alone, but is always immediately followed by the *Mihr Niyāyeš*, addressed to the great *yazata* who accompanies the sun across the heavens. These two are commonly referred to therefore by the one name, as *Khoršēd-Mihr Niyāyeš*. Then there is the *Māh Niyāyeš*, which should be recited at least thrice a month during the night prayers, at the significant phases of the moon; and finally two *niyāyeš* addressed to the Waters and Fire. The words of the five prayers evidently did not become fixed for many generations, and in their surviving forms they contain both late verses and some very old ones. The

[86] See M. N. Dhalla, *The Nyaishes or Zoroastrian Litanies, Avestan text with the Pahlavi, Sanskrit, Persian and Gujarati versions*, transl. with notes, New York 1908. (The Avestan readings need to be checked from Geldner's edition.)

one that has undergone the most drastic change seems the *Ābān Niyāyeš*, which perhaps once contained invocations of *Vouruna, but has come to consist almost wholly of verses from the hymn to Arədvī Sūrā Anāhitā. *Vouruna is still honoured, however, with his brother Ahura Mithra, in whose *niyāyeš* (v. 12) worship is offered to the pair in antique style, as "Mithra and the high Lord" (*mithra ahura bərəzanta*).[87] There is a similar invocation in the *Khoršēd Niyāyeš* (v. 12), where ancient elements are blended with purely Zoroastrian ones. It runs: "We sacrifice for Mithra, in all lands master of the land, whom Ahura Mazdā created as having most *khvarənah* among the spiritual *yazatas*. So may he come to our help—Mithra and the high Lord". Later in the same *niyāyeš* (v, 18), there is another archaic usage, this time a reference to the waters as the "wives of the Ahura" (*ahurānīš ahurāhe*). In the *Ātaš Niyāyeš* too there are some evidently ancient verses, belonging to the cult of the hearth fire;[88] but this is naturally the most strongly Zoroastrian in spirit of all the *niyāyeš*, and embodies no fewer than four verses from the *Gāthās* themselves. These were chosen evidently because they contain references to Aša, lord of fire, and a declaration of the spiritual purpose which should inform the act of offering the *ātaš zōhr*. The first three, *Y.* 33.12-14 (which form *ĀN* 1-3), are as follows:[89] "Arise for me, O Ahura! Take strength through devotion, O Holiest Spirit, Mazdā! (Take) power through the good offering, strong might through righteousness, plenitude through good intention. For (my) help, O far-seeing one, show me the incomparable things which (are) yours—those of the kingdom, O Ahura, which are the reward of good intention. O Bounteous Ārmaiti, instruct our consciences (*daēnā-*) through Aša. Then as gift Zoroaster gives to Mazdā the life indeed of his own body, the choiceness of his good intentions, and those of his acts and thoughts which accord with righteousness, and (his) obedience and dominion". Later in the *niyāyeš* (v. 17) comes the great eschatological verse, *Y.* 34.4: "Then, O Ahura, we desire your fire, powerful through *aša*, most swift, mighty, to be of manifest help to (your) supporter, but of visible harm, O Mazdā, to the hostile man...".

It seems likely that these Gathic verses were made part of the prayer

[87] It is noticeable that in the *niyāyeš* this ancient invocation (on which see above, p. 49) has not undergone the inversion to *ahura mithra* which occurs in later *yasna* passages (e.g. *Y.* 2.11.), which were composed at a time when the Ahura's identity as *Vouruna Apąm Napāt had evidently been forgotten, and he was given the precedence due to Ahura Mazdā, even though this violated the old rule of *dvandva* composition (that the shorter word must precede). See Gershevitch, *AHM*, 44.

[88] See above, pp. 154-5.

[89] On this translation of vv. 12, 14, which is essentially Humbach's, see above, pp. 218-9.

to fire in the early days of the faith, while Zoroaster's own words were still fully understood by the instructed, and were a source of direct inspiration to his followers. Another Gathic verse, known from its first words as the *Kəm-nā Mazdā* (*Y.* 46.7) came to be used as a protective *mąthra* or *bāj* when a shield was needed against evil. It runs: "Whom, O Mazdā, have you appointed protector for me, when the wicked one (*drəgvant-*) seeks to lay hold of me for harm, other than your fire and (good) purpose, through the actions of which two righteousness shall be realised, O Ahura? This doctrine do you proclaim to my conscience (*daēnā-*)".[90] It may even be that the prophet during his own lifetime taught his followers to use his words appropriately in this way, and that this was among the devotional usages which he himself established.

Of the first generations of those who bravely upheld his faith we know the names only, preserved in the *Farvardīn Yašt*. This hymn contains a great muster of the names of individuals whose *fravašis* are worthy of veneration,[91] among them the "first teachers and first hearers of the doctrine" (*paoirya- tkaēša-, paoirya- sāsnō.gūš-*).[92] Here are named Maidhyōi.mąŋha, Zoroaster's cousin and first convert, Kavi Vištāspa, and a few others familiar from the *Gāthās* or the tradition; but most are wholly unknown, men of a remote and forgotten time. This time seems to have been of long duration, to allow for the compilation of such lists, and occasionally indeed several generations of the one family are named. Thus not only is Saēna of the hundred pupils honoured, but also his great-grandson Utayuti,[93] so that, if one includes Ahūm.stūt, five generations of Zoroastrians are here represented, spanning, one would suppose, some 150 years.[94] Unfortunately there is no evidence to show when the last name was added in the *yašt*; but at least it can be said that no Medean or Persian is venerated there, whether as convert or teacher, king or priest. What is characteristic of early Zoroastrianism is that the *fravašis* of a group of women are reverenced, headed by those of the prophet's wife

[90] With the reading, in the first line, of *dadā* instead of *dadāt*, with better ms.-support, see Humbach, *Gathas* I, 130, II, 70; B. T. Anklesaria, *Gāthā Society Publications* 14, Bombay 1939, 72 (in Gujarati; cited by Taraporewala, *The Divine Songs of Zarathushtra*, 595). The verse now forms part of the *Srōš Bāj*, where it is followed by *Y.* 44.16 (with omission of the first line), *Vd.* 8.21 and the third line of *Y.* 49.10, the whole group of texts being referred to as the *Kəm-nā Mazdā*. (For the full text of the *Srōš Bāj* as it is now recited see, e.g., Darmesteter, *ZA* II, 686-8.)

[91] The long list is commented on by Darmesteter, *ZA* II, 529 ff.; for more general observations see Lommel, *Die Yāšt's*, 109-12. One of these early Zoroastrians (probably, from his place in the list, a kinsman of the prophet's) took, or was given, the name *Daēvō. tbiš*, "enemy to the *daēvas*" (v. 98), a courageous way of declaring allegiance to the new faith.

[92] *Yt.* 13.17, 149.

[93] V. 126.

[94] This point is made by Burrow, *JRAS* 1973, 138. On Saēna see above, p. 266.

Hvōvī and his daughters, and of Hutaosā, Vīštāspa's queen.[95]

There are two Avestan texts which yield some slight evidence for the geographical advance of the faith. One is the *Zamyād Yašt*, where it is said (v. 66) that the royal Khvarənah accompanies him "who rules there where is the Lake Kąsaoya, which receives the Haētumant...". The Haētumant is the modern Helmand, so Lake Kąsaoya must be what is now the Hāmun Lake in Seistan, in the south-east of Iran. The rulers of that region had evidently become such loyal Zoroastrians by the time this verse was composed that a connection was sought for them with the *kavis* of old, that is, with Vīštāspa's line. The justification for this seems to have been a faint similarity between the words Kąsaoya and *kavi*.[96] The lake in Seistan came to be regarded as belonging to the *kavis*, and having been given this association was held to guard in its depths the divinely-preserved seed of the prophet, from which the Saošyants or Saviours will one day come.[97] Such a development could not have taken place in the earliest days of the faith, with memory of the northern *kavis* still fresh, and the legend of the virgin-born Saošyants yet to be forged; and it furnishes yet another piece of evidence for the length of the prehistory of Zoroastrianism.

The other text provides more geographical material, but with less direct bearing on the faith. This is the first *fargerd* or chapter of the *Vidēvdāt* (later corrupted to *Vendidād*),[98] "the code abjuring *daēvas*". This is a collection of miscellaneous pieces of varying antiquity, put together at some relatively late date to form a night office celebrated to smite the powers of darkness. Its nucleus concerns the purity laws, to which were added various heterogeneous works, including this first *fargerd*.[99] In it are enumerated seventeen lands, headed by Airyanəm Vaēǰah, some of them otherwise unrecorded, others bearing familiar names. Each was created excellent by Ahura Mazdā, but suffers its own particular affliction, brought upon it in counter-creation by Angra Mainyu (which is why, evidently, the text finds a place in the *Vendidād*). Those lands which can be identified—notably Sughda (Sogdia), Mouru (Margiana), Bakhdhi (Bactria), Harōyu (Haraiva/Herat), Harakhvaiti (Arachoisa) and Haētumant (Drangiana/Seistan)—all belong to the east and north-east of Iran.[100] Various suggestions have been made as to why this list was originally drawn up,[101] the most reasonable (in the light of its preservation as a religious work) seeming to be that these were lands which early accepted Zoroastrianism (though later, evidently, than the wholly unknown regions named in the *Farvardīn Yašt*).[102] Khwarezmia does not appear among them; and its absence has been explained as due to its identification, as the land of the prophet's own people, with Airyanəm Vaēǰah, the traditional homeland of the Iranians, where all the greatest events in their prehistory were held to have taken place—although it must be admitted that the lines devoted to Airyanəm Vaēǰah, which introduce the text, are plainly late in composition.

Airyanəm Vaēǰah evidently owes its first place in this list of lands to its legendary importance; but Khwarezmia itself may have had a twofold claim to pre-eminence in the 7th century B.C., both as the homeland (as it is thought) of descendants of the "Avestan" people, and through political supremacy, according to an account given by Herodotus of this region before it was conquered by the Achaemenians. He wrote:[103] "There is a plain in Asia which is shut in on all sides by a mountain-range, and in this mountain-range are five openings. The plain lies on the confines of the Chorasmians, Hyrcanians, Parthians, Sarangians and Thamanaeans, and belonged formerly to the first-mentioned of these peoples. ... A mighty river, called the Aces, flows from the hills enclosing the plain". This river Markwart identified with the Harī Rūd and its continuation, the modern Tejen,[104] an identification which has been generally accepted. It seems accordingly that there once existed, while the Medean Empire flourished in the west, an eastern Iranian state which had its centre around Marv and Herat, but which was under Khwarezmian rule.[105] When the Persians arrived in these regions, however, in the mid-6th century B.C., the dominant power seems to have been Bactria; and a legend persisted, down into Sasanian times and beyond, which associated

[95] Vv. 139-42.

[96] The Pahlavi rendering of "Kąsaoya" is "Kayānsih", *kayān* being the Middle Persian plural of Av. *kavi*. Kąsaoya is perhaps in fact a derivative of a proper name *Kąsu, see Bartholomae, *Air. Wb.* 471.

[97] See in detail in the following chapter.

[98] On the name see Benveniste, "Que signifie *Vidēvdāt*?", *Henning Mem. Vol.*, 37-42.

[99] On it see Christensen, *Le premier chapitre du Vendidad, et l'histoire primitive des tribus iraniennes*, Copenhagen 1943, with references to earlier works; Herzfeld, *Zoroaster and his world*, Princeton 1947, 738-70.

[100] On the Ragha of the *Vd.* see Gershevitch, *JNES* XXIII, 1964, 36-7.

[101] See, with references, Christensen, op. cit., 1-8. Herzfeld, loc. cit., argued that the list was a "moral introduction to geography" (p. 741), with the workings of dualism being shown in a randomly selected list of lands.

[102] See Nyberg, *Rel.*, 313-27, who went so far as to interpret it as showing, through the order in which the countries were listed, the history of the spread of Zoroastrianism.

[103] *Histories*, III. 117.

[104] *Wehrot und Arang*, 8-11.

[105] Some among those who have accepted the date for Zoroaster of "258 years before Alexander" have identified this Khwarezmian empire with the kingdom of Kavi Vīštāspa, seeing the overthrow of his dynasty as the work of Cyrus the Great; see Henning, *Zoroaster*, 42-3.

both Zoroaster and his patron Vīštāspa with the Bactrian capital of Balkh.[106] Presumably this, like the legend which set the *kavis* in Seistan and made the Hāmun Lake holy, was a product of that mixture of piety and patriotism which led various Zoroastrian peoples to associate the prophet with their own homelands. The best-known example of this is the action of the Magi, who subsequently transferred Avestan place-names and happenings wholesale to Medean Azarbaijan, in the north-west of Iran, with such thoroughness that scholars long remained confused about their true location. They never succeeded, however, in silencing the older claims of Seistan and Bactria. The existence of these rival eastern traditions is yet another testimony to the ancientness of Zoroastrianism; for it appears that already by the 6th century B.C. it was no longer certainly known where the prophet had in fact lived.

One question for which there seems no hope of finding an answer is how far the various eastern Iranian peoples prayed and worshipped in their own colloquial tongues, apart from the *Staota yesnya* and the Gathic prayers and verses, and how far they used Avestan. The state of preservation of the Younger Avesta suggests that there may have been some period when the sacred language was threatened with neglect; but the data are too meagre to allow of useful speculatiou. What seems certain, from the various scattered indications, is that Zoroastrianism had grown old already in eastern Iran, gaining in numbers, establishing its doctrines and cult, and shaping its literature, before ever it reached the Medes and Persians; for neither in the extant Avesta, nor in Pahlavi translations of lost Avestan books (as distinct from commentaries), is there any reference to western Iranian kings or peoples—not a single proper name or place name, tradition or loan-word.[107] If, as is sometimes claimed (on the basis of the pseudo-historical date for Zoroaster of "258 years before Alexander"), the faith had conquered Persia while in its infancy, its holy works must have taken some imprint from the powerful Magian priesthood. It can only be hoary antiquity which kept the Younger Avesta free from any western Iranian influence. A tradition had clearly been established before Persia became Zoroastrian, and this remained inviolable.

[106] For references see Jackson, *Zoroaster*, 199-201, and further in Vol. II.

[107] The only discernable western elements in the Avesta (such as details of the Yima legend, the use of Graeco-Roman measurements in the *Vd.*, and the Babylonian concept of the recurring "world year"), which must have been introduced by the western Iranians, are wholly alien ones from non-Iranian civilisations. Nothing from western Iranian culture itself finds a place there. (On the question of a western as well as an eastern Ragha see Vol. II.)

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE LEGENDS OF ZOROASTER AND HIS SONS

With no absolute chronology for any part of the Avesta, there is no means of knowing how soon after Zoroaster's death the legend took shape whereby he is presented not only as a prophet but also as a world-saviour, who through his own actions and those of his miraculously-born sons will bring about the restoration of the original state of happiness for the world and man; but there are references to this legend in the *Farvardīn* and *Zam Yašts*, and it is set out fully in Pahlavi texts which evidently derive, directly or indirectly, from lost books of the Avesta. It undoubtedly developed and took form bit by bit; and in the final version theologically profound concepts intermingle with more superficially wonderful matter.

Concerning the birth of Zoroaster the *Dīnkard*[1] relates how three things, his *khwarr* (Av. *khvarənah*) or heaven-sent glory, his *fravahr* (Av. *fravaši*), guarding or informing spirit, and his *tan-gōhr*, physical body, were "united in his future mother to form the perfect man, under the guidance of divine powers". At Ohrmazd's command the prophet's *khwarr* was brought from the world of light to the sun, from there to the moon, and thence to the stars. From there it descended to the hearth of Zoroaster's maternal grandfather, Frāhīm.rvāną.zōiš; and from that moment the fire there burnt perpetually, needing no fuel. From this hearth-fire the *khwarr* passed to Frāhīm.rvāną.zōiš's wife, the mother of Dughdōv (Av. Dughdōvā). Dughdōv, herself born with this *khwarr*, radiated light about her, illuminating even darkness; but the *dēvs* afflicted the people among whom she grew up in cruel ways, and put it into their hearts that the girl was a sorceress and the cause of their sufferings. So her father sent her away to the house of the chief of the Spitama clan, the father of Pourušasp. Thus as so often the *spenta* powers turned the wicked doings of the *dēvs* to good.

Zoroaster's *fravahr* had meantime been existing in the same form as that of the Amahraspands (Av. *Aməša Spəntas*); and it was escorted by Nēryōsang (Nairyō.saŋha), the divine messenger, and Jam (Yima) king of the primeval paradise,[2] to where the Amahraspands Vahman and Ard-

[1] On the *Dk.* texts see most recently M. Molé, *La légende de Zoroastre selon les textes pehlevis*, Paris 1967, 2 ff. For the following analysis see Kaj Barr, "Irans Profet som Τέλειος Ἄνθρωπος", *Festskrift til L. L. Hammerich*, Copenhagen 1952, 26-36. The general material for the legend of the prophet is gathered by A. V. W. Jackson, *Zoroaster*, Ch. III-V.

[2] On Yima's role in this see above, p. 94.

vahišt had formed a *hōm* (*haoma*) stalk, "as tall as a man, fresh and very beautiful". The *fravahr* was set within this stalk, which was brought from the "endless light" of heaven down to earth and placed upon a tall tree. After Pourušasp had married Dughdōv, Vahman and Ardvahišt met him walking in the meadows and led him to this tree. Seeing the *hōm* in all its beauty he wanted to fell the tree to get at it; but Vahman helped him instead to climb up to reach it, and he bore it back to his wife. Meantime Zoroaster's physical substance, the *tan-gōhr*, had been entrusted to Hordād and Amurdād, lords of waters and plants. They caused the clouds to let rain fall, plentiful and warm, to the joy of cattle and men. Counselled by Vahman and Ardvahišt, Pourušasp led six white heifers out to graze; and although they had borne no calves their udders became full of milk, in which was the prophet's *tan-gōhr*, received through the rain-nourished plants. Pourušasp drove the heifers home for his wife to milk, and he himself crushed the *hōm* stalk and mixed it with the milk, and he and Dughdōv both drank. Thus Zoroaster's *khwarr*, *fravahr* and *tan-gōhr* became united in his mother through the actions of Vahman and Ardvahišt, Hordād and Amurdād, and their creations, while Shahrevar and Spendārmad, through sky and earth, provided the setting for this great event; and so healing was the prophet's presence in the world that, while he grew up, the waters and plants revived and throve, and Ahriman retreated in alarm.[3]

The significance of the three components of Zoroaster's being, it has been suggested, is that through the *khwarr*, *fravahr* and *tan-gōhr* he received "his ordination as priest, warrior and herdsman",[4] the triple vocation attributed to him in *Yt.* 13.89, and strongly emphasised in the tradition. "Pourušasp said to Zardušt: 'I thought that I had begot a son who was priest, warrior and herdsman...'; and Zardušt replied: 'I who am your son am priest, warrior and herdsman'."[5] *Khwarr* is interpreted as divine grace,[6] representing the priesthood: the martial *fravahr*, protecting against evil, stood, it is thought, for the warriors; and the *tan-gōhr*, transmitted by plants and cattle, for the herdsman. The prophet in his miraculous birth thus represented all human society; and since the physical creations had their part in his begetting, the story of his coming into the world emphasised also Zoroaster's own teaching of the profound alliance existing between man and nature in the striving for Frašegird.

[3] *Yt.* 17. 18-19.
[4] Barr, art. cit., 36.
[5] *Zādspram*, XI.1-2 (ed. BTA, 67/lxxxix; transl. West as XVIII.2-3, *SBE* XLVII, 148-9).
[6] See above, p. 66.

Zoroaster is said to have been the only child ever to laugh at birth, instead of weeping[7]—a fitting tradition about a prophet who taught that laughter and joy belong to God, and tears and grief to the Devil. In the legend various incidents are related showing how the *dēvs*, who had earlier persecuted his mother, now tried to destroy the infant, again by instilling into men's minds the idea that the divine radiance surrounding it through its *khwarr* was something evil.[8] Accordingly Pourušasp is said to have tried repeatedly to do away with the child. First he laid it on firewood, which he sought to light; but the flames would not take hold. Then he had it put in the path of a herd of cattle; but a bull stood over it and protected it from the hooves. Then it was placed where horses would trample it, but a stallion saved it in the same way. Next it was carried to the lair of a she-wolf, in expectation that the savage beast would kill it; but she accepted it among her own cubs, and Vahman brought an ewe to the den which suckled it. (It was impossible in Zoroastrian legend for the wolf herself to give milk to the infant, since wolves are regarded as *daēvic* creatures.[9])

Further legends of the prophet's childhood tell of his exceptional understanding and wisdom, and of his opposition even as a boy to the cult of the *dēvs*. One relates how a priest of the *dēvs* was a guest in his father's house and was invited to say the formal *mąthra* before food. Zoroaster strenuously objected, to Pourušasp's displeasure, and the affronted priest departed pronouncing maledictions, only to fall dead from his horse as he rode away.[10] Here as elsewhere the prophet's hostility to *dēv* worship is represented as founded solely on what he regarded as the wickedness of the beings who were venerated, and not on the manner of their cult.[11]

The legends which remain best known and most current among Zoroastrians today are those concerned with the prophet's conversion of Vīštāsp. It is said that at Vīštāsp's own court he met with hostility from

[7] *Dk.* VII. 3.2 (Molé, *Légende*, 29). Cf. *Dk.* VII. 3.25 (ibid., p. 33) and for other references see Jackson, *Zoroaster*, 27 nn. 4, 5.
[8] See *Dk.* VII. 3.8 ff. (Molé, *Légende*, 29 ff.).
[9] The awkwardness of this particular legend in this respect makes it probable that it was an alien one, evolved in late Parthian or Sasanian times under the influence of the legend of Romulus and Remus. Several Sasanian seals bear the apparently borrowed motif of a she-wolf suckling two human infants, see, e.g., A. D. H. Bivar, *Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum*, Part III, Vol. VI, Portfolio 1, Pl. XIX.14, and for a discussion of the subject, with further references, the article by the same author, *BSOAS* XXX, 1967, 519-20.
[10] *Dk.* VII. 3.32-45 (Molé, *Légende*, 35-7).
[11] Cf., e.g., *Dk.* VII.4.13-14 (Molé, *Légende*, 45). With regard to the lesser powers of evil there is a curious and evidently popular legend of how a female *drug* sought to seduce the prophet, claiming to be Spendārmad; and how by triple adjuration the seemingly lovely creature was forced to turn her back on the prophet, revealing hideousness and corruption (Dk. VII.4.55-62, Molé, op. cit., 53). Here the term *drug* is used of an evil being performing a part usually assigned to a *pairikā*.

the *kayags* and *karabs* (*kavis* and *karapans*), with whom he disputed at a great assembly—a tradition which may well be based on reality, for Vīštāsp must have had his own priests and seers, who would hardly have welcomed a new prophet claiming divine authority. After three days of debate Zoroaster is said to have triumphed, only to be traduced by his enemies to Vīštāsp, who had him cast into prison. From here, it is related, he won his release, and also the willing ear of Vīštāsp, by curing a favourite horse of the king's, which had become suddenly paralysed. The *Dīnkard* refers allusively to what was plainly a well-known legend;[12] and the details, which suggest the workings of popular fancy, are found only in the late *Zardušt Nāma*.[13] According to this account the prophet cured each limb of the horse in return for a particular concession by the king; firstly, that Vīštāsp should himself accept the faith; secondly, that his son Isfandiyār (Spentōdāta) should fight in support of it; thirdly, that his queen Hutōs (Hutaosā) should also be converted; and fourthly, that the names of the prophet's traducers should be divulged and these men put to death. When these four boons had been granted the horse leapt to its feet again, sound in every limb.

It is then told that Vīštāsp in his turn sought four favours through Zoroaster, in order finally to establish his belief. Again these are known in detail only from the *Zardušt Nāma*, but allusions in the Pahlavi books prove the existence of an older tradition. The first favour was that he, Vīštāsp, should know his final fate and place in the hereafter; the second, that his body should be invulnerable; the third, that he should have knowledge of all things, past, present and future; and the fourth, that his soul should not leave his body until the resurrection. Zoroaster conceded all four favours, but stipulated that only one might be enjoyed by Vīštāsp himself. The king chose the first, and was thereupon visited by the Amahraspands Vahman and Ardvahišt, together with the Fire of Ohrmazd, whose radiance awed the king and his courtiers. Vīštāsp received through Ardvahišt a bowl containing *hōm*-juice mixed with *mang*; when he drank this he lost consciousness and saw in vision the glories of heaven which awaited him hereafter.[14] On recovering his senses he accordingly accepted

[12] *Dk.* VII. 4.70 (Molé, *Légende*, 55).

[13] Ed. and transl. by F. Rosenberg, *Le livre de Zoroastre (Zarātusht Nāma)*, St. Pétersbourg 1904, text p. 48 ff., transl. p. 49 ff.; Eng. transl. by E. B. Eastwick apud J. Wilson, *The Pārsi Religion*, Bombay 1843, 504 ff.

[14] *Dk.* VII.4.85, see Molé, op. cit., 59. Visions of the hereafter form part of the mantic tradition of many pre-literate peoples, as is attested for Iran in the *Ardāy Virāz Nāmag* also, see this *Handbuch*, I.IV. 2.1, pp. 48-9. Similarly in this latter text the righteous Vīrāz is given a drink containing *mang* to make him unconscious and release his spirit to visit the other world, see *AVN* I 38, II 22, 29. *Pace* Henning, *Zoroaster*, 32, it seems impossible that this *mang* should have been a deadly poison rather than a narcotic, see above, p. 231 n. 11.

whole-heartedly the new teachings, and persuaded his queen to do the like. This is all that is related, briefly, in the *Dīnkard*. The *Zardušt Nāma* tells how the other three gifts promised by the prophet were distributed: Vīštāsp's son Pešōtan (Pəšōtanu) received a cup of milk from Zoroaster, and through it became undying.[15] His minister, Jāmāsp, by inhaling certain perfumes, attained all knowledge; and the brave Isfandiyār ate a pomegranate, and his body became invulnerable, so that he could defend the faith. This story is much loved and often repeated among Zoroastrians of the Irani community, who connect the things through which the boons were given with the offerings regularly consecrated in the minor service of worship and thanksgiving, the *āfrīnagān*. There the *hōm* and *mang* are held to be represented by wine. Milk is always present, and incense (*bōy*) is offered to the fire, while the pomegranate, symbol of eternity, is the most highly prized of the fruits which are blessed. It seems possible, therefore, that the legend of the four gifts was evolved to give a specifically Zoroastrian significance to the cultic offerings of this service, which is one very familiar to the laity, and so to teach the people more about the origins of their faith. (By a somewhat similar development the nine nights' retreat which follows the *barašnom* is said by the Iranis to have been instituted in remembrance of Zoroaster's imprisonment after he was slandered. This analogy seems, however, to have been thought out comparatively recently, since there is no reference to it in the *Rivāyats*, and no knowledge of it appears among the Parsis.)

The legends which attach to Zoroaster's sons touch deeper levels, and are attested in the Avesta itself. Thus the three sons begotten by him in the natural way were said to have initiated and to represent the three classes of society. The eldest, Isat.vāstra, born of his first marriage, was regarded as head of the priestly class; and his two sons by the second wife, Hvarə.čithra and Urvatat.nara, were considered to be heads of the warrior and farming classes respectively.[16] Hvarə.čithra (or presumably his *fravaši*) will lead the armies commanded by the immortal Pəšōtanu son of Vīštāspa;[17] and Urvatat.nara is "master and judge" (*ahu* and *ratu*) of the kingdom of Yima of the good pastures—an example of the Zoroastrianisation of one of the myths of pagan Iran.[18] In general the developed narrative

[15] This tradition is known from the Avesta itself through a simile in a late text, *Vištāsp Yašt 4*: "May you be as free from sickness, as immortal as Pəšōtanu!". See Darmesteter, *ZA* II, 666.

[16] See, e.g. *GBd.* XXXV.56 (BTA, 301); *Ind. Bd.* XXXII.5 (transl. West, *SBE* V, 142); and on this tradition see Benveniste, *JA* 1932, 118-9.

[17] For further Pahlavi passages concerning Pešōtan see Darmesteter, *ZA* II, 638 n. 125.

[18] See *Vd.* 2.43 and Benveniste, art. cit., 119.

concerning Zoroaster's sons shows an interweaving of the old Iranian heritance of traditions and legends with new religious beliefs.

This interweaving is at its most striking in the case of what is told of the three sons held to have been born to the prophet posthumously. The belief that there were three such sons evidently developed gradually, partly presumably through analogy with the three historical sons, partly because of the Zoroastrian tendency to have all things in triplicate. The original legend appears to have been that eventually, at the end of "limited time", a son will be born of the seed of the prophet, which is preserved miraculously in a lake (named in the Avesta Lake Kąsaoya),[19] where it is watched over by 99,999 *fravašis* of the just.[20] When Frašō.kərəti is near, a virgin will bathe in this lake and become with child by the prophet, giving birth to a son, Astvat.ərəta, "he who embodies righteousness". Astvat.ərəta will be the Saošyant, the Saviour who will bring about Frašō.kərəti, smiting "*daēvas* and men"; and his name derives from Zoroaster's words in *Y.* 43.16: *astvaṯ ašəm hyāṯ* "may righteousness be embodied". The legend of this great Messianic figure, the cosmic saviour, appears to stem from Zoroaster's teaching about the one "greater than good" to come after him (*Y.* 43.3)[21], upon which there worked the profound Iranian respect for lineage, so that the future Saviour had necessarily to be of the prophet's own blood. This had the consequence that, despite the story of the Saošyant's miraculous conception, there was no divinisation of him, and no betrayal therefore of Zoroaster's teachings about the part which humanity has to play in the salvation of the world. The Saviour will be a man, born of human parents. "Zoroastrianism... attributes to man a distinguished part in the great cosmic struggle. It is above all a soteriological part, because it is man who has to win the battle and eliminate evil".[22]

The Saošyant, although thus fully representing humanity, is not only miraculously conceived but is accompanied, like his father, by divine grace, by Khvarənah (Khwarr);[23] and it is in *Yašt* 19, which celebrates Khvarənah, that the extant Avesta has most to tell of him: "We sacrifice to the mighty ... kingly Glory ... which will accompany the victorious Saošyant and also (his) other comrades, so that he may make wonderful (*fraša-*) existence, not ageing, not dying, not decaying, not rotting, ever-living, ever-benefiting, powerful..." (vv. 88-89). "When Astvat.ərəta

[19] *Yt.* 19.92; *Vd.* 19.5.
[20] *Yt.* 13.62; cf. *GBd.* XXXV.60 (BTA, 301-3).
[21] See above, p. 235.
[22] Molé, *Culte*, 395.
[23] *Yt.* 19.89.

comes out from the Kąsaoya water, messenger of Mazdā Ahura, son of Vīspa.taurvairī, brandishing the victorious weapon which the mighty Thraētaona bore when Aži Dahāka was slain, which the Tūra Fraŋrasyan bore when the wicked Zainigu was slain, which Kavi Haosravah bore when the Tūra Fraŋrasyan was slain, which Kavi Vīštāspa bore to avenge Aša upon the enemy host, then will he drive the Drug out from the world of Aša. He will gaze with the eyes of wisdom, he will behold all creation ... he will gaze with the eyes of sacrifice[24] upon the whole corporeal world, and heedfully will he make the whole corporeal world undying. His comrades—(those) of the victorious Astvat.ərəta—advance, thinking well, speaking well, acting well, of good conscience (*daēnā-*); and they will utter no false word with their tongues. Before them will flee Wrath of the bloody club, ill-fortuned. Aša will conquer the wicked Drug, hideous, murky. Aka Manah will also be overcome, Vohu Manah overcomes him. Overcome will be the falsely-spoken (word), the truly-spoken word overcomes it ... Haurvatāt and Amərətāt will overcome both hunger and thirst. Haurvatāt and Amərətāt will overcome wicked hunger and thirst. Aŋra Mainyu doing evil works will flee, bereft of power" (vv. 92-96).

These verses show admirably how the Zoroastrian concept of the future Saviour was brought into relationship with the ancient heroic tales of the "Avestan" people, so that Astvat.ərəta is seen as the culmination of a line of valiant warriors, all of whom had fought bravely and victoriously against some great evil, embodied in man or beast. It is striking too that this development evidently took place relatively early, before Fraŋrasyan was himself debased into being a representative of evil,[25] and apparently before the legend evolved that Aži Dahāka is not dead but fettered, awaiting the last battle. (This makes it increasingly improbable that there is an Indo-European connection between the Iranian myth of the fettered Aži Dahāka and the Norse one of the fettered Loki; and it seems likely that the Iranian myth is a product of late Zoroastrian scholasticism, which evolved a pattern whereby all representatives of the powers of evil will be gathered again for their final defeat at the end of the world.) As well as being a fighting hero, the last of warriors, the Saošyant, "who will bring benefit (*saṷah-*) to the whole corporeal world"[26] is also a priest, as befits a son of Zoroaster, and looking "with the eyes of sacrifice" upon creation, he will consecrate it anew and restore it to immortality.

Since Astvat.ərəta represents the "high point of fulfilment of the human

[24] *ižayā vaēnāṯ dōithrābya* (v. 94), on which see Humbach, *IF* LXIII, 1957, 43 n. 7.
[25] See above, pp. 106-07.
[26] *Yt.* 13.129.

race",[27] each section of the long list of male *ašavans* in the *Farvardīn Yašt* ends with an invocation of his *fravaši* (*Yt.* 13.110, 117, 128). The sum of the *fravašis* which have been born on earth is comprehended in the expression "all the *fravašis* of the *ašavans* from Gayō.marətan to Saošyant" (*Yt.* 13.145). The Avestan texts know no individual Saošyant, so called, other than Astvat.ərəta. *Yt.* 19.95 refers, however, to his comrades; and six names which precede his in *Yt.* 13.128 are explained in the Pahlavi *Dādestān ī dīnīg* as being those of his coadjutors who will fulfil his work in the six *kešvars* that encircle Khvaniratha.[28] Darmesteter, who first drew attention to this passage,[29] pointed out that the names of the six in fact show a symmetrical correspondence with the six *kešvars*, appearing in formal pairs in the same way. The two lists are as follows:

Raočas.čaēšman	Arəzahi
Hvarə.čaēšman	Savahi
Frādat.khvarənah	Fradadh.afšu
Vidhat.khvarənah	Vīdadh.afšu
Vouru.nəmah	Vouru.barəšti
Vouru.savah	Vouru.jarəšti

As Darmesteter says, the correspondences between the names are not so close that one can be sure that those of the six heroes of the *Farvardīn Yašt* were evolved simply to represent the six *kešvars*; but the remarkable symmetry of the last two pairs makes this very probable, for "it was very much in the spirit of Mazdeism that, having a Saošyant in Khvaniratha, one should provide him with representatives in the six other *kešvars*".[30] This is the spirit, however, of later scholasticism, rather than of the early gospel of Zoroaster.

Between these six names and that of the Saošyant himself occur two others, Ukhšyat.ərəta and Ukhšyat.nəmah, meaning respectively "He who makes righteousness grow", and "He who makes reverence grow". These names, like the six preceding ones, appear to have been added by a later tradition, whereby was evolved the myth of two earlier Saošyants,

[27] Nyberg, *Rel.*, 306. The fact that the human race begins with Gayō.marətan and ends with the Saošyant is, however, no reason for identifying these two beings, remote from one another in nature as well as time. The attempt has nevertheless been made by more than one scholar. See most recently E. Abegg, "Urmensch und Messias bei den Iraniern", *Asiatische Studien*, 1961, 1-8, with references to earlier essays in this direction.

[28] *Dd.*, *Purs.* XXXV. 4-6; ed. Dhabhar, 72-3, transl. West, *SBE* XVIII, 78-9. On the the *kešvars* see above, p. 134.

[29] See his *Ét. iraniennes* II, 206-8.

[30] Ibid., 207-8.

brothers of Astvat.ərəta. To match the three in *Yt.* 13.142, at the end of a list of the *fravašis* of *ašavan* women, appear three names, of which the last one is Ǝrədat.fədhrī, "she who brings fulfilment to the father". This was evidently coined to express its owner's part in bearing Zoroaster's son to complete his mission, for she is the virgin-mother of the Saošyant, Astvat.ərəta; because of her son's role, she is also known as Vīspa.taurvairī, "she who conquers all". The two names which precede hers, and which are plainly modelled on it (somewhat awkwardly, as to both grammar and sense) are Srūtat.fədhrī "she who has a famous father", and Vaŋhu.fədhrī "she who has a good father".[31] Such imitative names could naturally be introduced into the ancient text at any time, by any priest with a modest knowledge of Avestan. The full-blown legend, as it is preserved in the Pahlavī books, is as follows: Zoroaster thrice approached his third wife, Hvōvī. "Each time the seed fell upon the ground. The *yazad* Nēryōsang took the light and power of that seed and entrusted them to the *yazad* Anāhīd to guard ... and 99,999 *fravahrs* of the just are appointed for their protection, so that the *dēvs* may not destroy them".[32] The seed thus given to the *yazatā* of the waters is preserved in Lake Kayānsih (Kąsaoya), where "even now are seen three lamps glowing at the bottom of the lake";[33] and in the course of time each of the three virgins named in *Yt.* 13.142 will bathe there and conceive a son by the prophet, and each of these three sons will have his share in furthering the work of redemption.[34] The first two virgins are both said to be descended from Isadvāstar, Zoroaster's eldest son by his first wife[35]—a further indication of the artificiality of the elaborated legend. This development introduces the characteristic Zoroastrian feature of *khvaētvadatha*.

The tradition of the coming Saviours, thus triplicated, is set in a framework of cosmic history, whereby "limited time" was identified with a "world year" divided into periods of 1000 years each. It is generally held that this concept of the world year is to be attributed to Babylonian speculation concerning recurrent "great years" repeating themselves monotonously throughout time.[36] In considering this development of the legend one enters therefore into the historical period of the faith, after it

[31] On these three, and their names, see Darmesteter, op. cit., 208-10.

[32] *GBd.* XXXV.60 (BTA, 303).

[33] *GBd.* XXXIII.37 (BTA, 283).

[34] An account of the three saviours, their births and achievements, is given in *Dk.* VII.8.1 ff. (ed. Sanjana, Vol. XIV; transl. West, *SBE* XLVII, 107 ff., as VII.9.1 ff.). See also the *Pahl. Riv. Dd.* XLVIII (ed. Dhabhar, 141 ff.).

[35] See *Dk.* VII.7.55 (*Dk*M. 667.1 ff.), VII.8.18 (*Dk*M. 671.4 ff.).

[36] See F. Cumont, "La fin du monde selon les mages occidentaux", *RHR* CIII, 1931, 56 ff.

had been adopted in western Iran. The Zoroastrian texts vary as to how many millennia make up the world-year. Some give the figure as nine (three times three being a favoured Zoroastrian number); others as twelve, corresponding to the twelve months of the natural year and the twelve signs of the zodiac.[37] There are, however, grounds for thinking that the original figure was rather 6000 years,[38] a figure which was increased to 9000 or 12,000 as scholastics elaborated the scheme. Certainly it is only within the last 6000 years that any events are represented as taking place upon this earth.[39] The full scheme of the 12,000-year period, as preserved in the *Bundahišn*, is as follows: During the first 3000 years Ohrmazd became aware of Ahriman; and knowing through his omniscience of the struggle which must be, he then created his creation in the *mēnōg* state. Ahriman, afflicted always with belated knowledge, became aware in his turn of Ohrmazd, and "because of his desire to hurt and his malicious nature"[40] attacked him and his creation. His onslaught was in vain, and he "rushed back to darkness and miscreated many *dēvs*, the destroyers of creation".[41] Ohrmazd then offered peace, which his malignant adversary refused; whereat Ohrmazd proposed a time for contest between them "in the state of Mixture" (*pad gumēzišn*),[42] namely the following 9000 years. To this Ahriman, not able to foresee the outcome, agreed, and a pact was made between them (which is duly watched over by Mihr, lord of the covenant).[43] Accordingly during the second 3000 years Ohrmazd established his creation physically, *pad gētīg*;[44] and at the beginning of the third set of three millennia, that is, in the 6000th year, Ahriman attacked, bringing death and evil into the world. "But foreseeing this Ahura Mazdā has already at the beginning of the second period created Zoroaster's *fravaši* ... and has thus initiated the act of salvation."[45] At the end of the

[37] For the relevant passages see Zaehner, *Zurvan*, 96 ff. It is thought that the division of world history into twelve periods which appears frequently in Jewish apocalyptic is due to Iranian influence; see most recently D. S. Russell, *The method and message of Jewish apocalyptic*, Philadelphia 1964, 229.

[38] Thus it is suggested that the well-known statement that Zoroaster lived 6000 years before Plato (Alcibiades I.121) was connected with this idea and with the idea (held also by the Pythagoreans) of the recurrence of "great years", so that "the relationship between Zoroastrian and Platonic dualism, as well as the law of nature, had to bring back, at the end .. of six thousand years, a representative of the same ideas" (Benveniste, *The Persian religion according to the chief Greek texts*, 20; cf. Cumont, art. cit., 58).

[39] In *GBd.* XXXIII (BTA, 273 ff.), the world year begins in fact with the first millennium of the mixed state, which is the sixth millennium of the 12,000 year scheme. On the 12,000 year concept see further Nyberg, *JA* 1931, 105 ff.

[40] *GBd.* I.16 (BTA, 7).

[41] *GBd.* I.17 (BTA, 7).

[42] *GBd.* I.26 (BTA, 9).

[43] *Zand i Vahman Yašt*, VII.31-2 (BTA, 66/123-4).

[44] *GBd.* Ia (BTA, 21 ff.).

[45] Barr, *Festskrift til L. L. Hammerich*, 29. For a table of the Zoroastrian chronology

third period the prophet is born in the *gētīg* state, and in the year 9000, the beginning of the fourth period, he receives the revelation of the Good Religion, and the final struggle for redemption is joined.[46]

It is during this last period that the three Sōšyants (Saošyants), Zoroaster's sons, are born, towards the end of each millennium (10,000, 11,000, 12,000), each contributing to the process of redemption. The hope of a coming Saviour, thus triplicated, appears to have become interwoven, however, with a quite different tradition, which probably existed in Iran in one form or another long before Zoroaster taught. This is a tradition, widely attested among different peoples of the world, that there had once been a golden age on earth, from which pinnacle of happiness and well-being mankind had thereafter steadily descended, to reach the troubles and sorrows of the present age. Such a tradition could readily be reconciled with the doctrine of the originally perfect creation of Ohrmazd, corrupted by Ahriman; but it conflicted with the fundamental optimism of Zoroastrianism, whereby after the prophet had received his revelation there should have been a steady spreading of knowledge of the Good Religion and hence of righteousness among mankind, and therefore a drawing near of Frašō.kərəti. No doubt, however, a prophetic literature existed earlier among the pagan Iranians which embodied the pessimistic tradition of a decline and fall—a tradition that embraced the legend of the golden age of Yima; and such is the tenacity of ancient Iran that in time Zoroastrian priests evolved a new prophetic literature of their own, in which the two world-views, pessimistic and optimistic, were reconciled in a pattern that repeated itself every thousand years during the fourth period of the world-year. This prophetic literature is best exemplified, among the surviving Pahlavi texts, in the *Zand ī Vahman Yašt* and the *Jāmāsp Nāmag*, but has left its traces widely also in other works.[47]

In the *Vahman Yašt* the prophecy is represented as gained through

from the creation of the *fravašis* onward see West, *SBE* XLVII, intro., xxviii-xxxi; reproduced by Jackson, *Zoroaster*, 179-81.

[46] It is possible that this doctrine is broadly in harmony with Zoroaster's own conception of his mission, for the passage in Y.29 where he is designated by Ahura Mazdā as the protector of the "cow" has been interpreted as referring to the prophet's *fravaši*, existing at a time before his physical birth. See F. Justi apud Moulton, *EZ*, 348 n. 4.

[47] For a survey, with references, see Söderblom "Ages of the world" (Zoroastrian), *ERE* I, 207. The *ZVYt.* was edited and translated by B. T. Anklesaria, Bombay 1957 (as *Zand i Vohūman Yasn*). The major part of the *JN* has been edited and translated by H. W. Bailey, "To the Žāmāsp Nāmak", *BSOS* VI, 1930-1931, 55-85, 581-600; and discussed in detail (again with text and transl.) by E. Benveniste, "Une apocalypse pehlevie: le Žāmāsp Nāmak", *RHR* CVI, 1932, 337-80. (For editions of the longer *Ayādgār i Jāmāspig* see this *Handbuch*, I.IV. 2.1. p. 50). The prophecy is also found in the *GBd.* XXXIII (BTA, 273-83) in a chapter edited by G. Messina, *Orientalia* IV, 1935, 257-90; and in the *Pahl. Riv. Dd.* XLVIII (ed. Dhabhar, 141 ff.).

vision (visionary literature is widely associated with prophecy among preliterate peoples).[48] Zoroaster sees in a dream a tree from which seven branches grow, and this dream is interpreted for him in the following manner by Ohrmazd himself:[49] "O Spitaman Zardušt, the tree whose trunk you have seen is the world which I, Ohrmazd, created; and the seven branches which you have seen are the seven times which will come. That of gold is the reign of King Vīštāsp ... That of silver is the reign of Ardašīr the Kay, who is called Vahman, son of Spentōdād...[50] That of copper is the reign of [Valakhš] the Arsacid king, who will remove from the world existing heresies...[51] That of brass is the reign of Ardašīr [the Sasanian] and [his son] king Shābuhr, and Ādurbād ... of the true religion. That of lead is the reign of king Vahrām Gōr, who will make apparent the spirit of joy. That of steel is the reign of king Khosrau, son of Kavād... That of iron is the vile rule of *dēvs* with dishevelled hair, of the seed of Wrath, O Spitaman Zardušt, at the end of your millennium". In the summary version of the prophecy preserved in the *Dīnkard* (on the authority of the lost Avestan *Sūdgar Nask*)[52] there are only four times, of gold, silver, steel and iron. It seems that the tradition of four ages of metal, "which mark the progressive decline of humanity, was current in antiquity and that its origin is very old. It was accepted in Greece at the time of Hesiod, that is to say from the 8th century ...".[53] It is possible that the association of the successive ages with metals in Iran was due to foreign, that is, Hellenistic influences, and that the enlarging of four ages to seven was similarly the result of alien contacts, in this case with Babylonian astrologers, who associated the "great years" with the seven planets, and hence produced a doctrine of seven "times".[54]

In the elaborated scheme of the *Vahman Yašt* the three additional ages —copper, brass and lead—were inserted before the grim iron age of the present, which for the redactors of the Pahlavi works was the time of foreign rule, of the overlordship of the Wrath-begotten Arabs. Whatever

[48] See Chadwick, *Growth of Literature* III, 846 f.

[49] *Zand i Vahman Yašt*, III.20-9 (ed. BTA, 12-16/104-6). In the *Jāmāsp Nāmag* it is Vīštāsp who seeks enlightenment from his minister Jāmāsp, who has received the gift of all wisdom; and in the Greco-Iranian *Oracles* of *Hystaspes* it is a *vaticinans puer* who expounds his vision to Vīštāsp, probably, as Benveniste has argued (art. cit., 377-9), Zoroaster himself as a boy.

[50] On the identification of the legendary Vahman, son of Kay Vīštāsp, with Ardašīr (Artakhšathra) see Christensen, *Les Kayanides*, 98, 124, and further in Vol. II.

[51] By an obvious textual displacement this paragraph in the original follows the next one. The correct order is found in the *Zarātusht Nāma* (ed. Rosenberg 48/66-7), where the vision is given as part of the life of the prophet.

[52] *Dk.* IX.7.1-2 (Sanjana, Vol. XVII; transl. West, *SBE* XXXVII, 180-1 as IX.8.1-6).

[53] Cumont, art. cit. (above, n. 36), 50.

[54] See ibid., 50 ff.

the divergences in detail, the general pattern of the prophecy is the same in all versions, that of a slow but steady decline, age by age, in both standards of human life and conditions of the surrounding world, a decline which is on occasion checked but never wholly arrested by the actions of noble and heroic men. The final age of iron will not only be the "basest of times"[55] for mankind, but will see the earth itself contracting, crops failing, rains lessening and animals growing stunted.[56]

This sombre prophecy belongs to a well-known category of ancient literature, which has been termed "prophetic history",[57] that is, history foretold by someone, usually a seer or divine being, who is represented as speaking long before the events described took place. The history itself "as a rule consists largely of a succession of kings", but there are also "curiously widespread prophecies relating to an elemental catastrophe, sometimes connected with the end of the world."[58] The prophetic tradition of pagan Iran, belonging to this general type, was adapted to Zoroastrian optimism and fitted into the pattern of the "world year" in the following way: the time of Creation was one of pure goodness, and so the first 6000 years of "limited time" passed first in *mēnōg* and then in *gētīg* state, constitute the golden age. Then Ahriman attacks, and an evil time begins. At the end of the first millennium (c. 7000) Jam (Yima) departs this life, and conditions grow ever more miserable under the misrule of Dahāk (Aži Dahāka). 1000 years later Dahāk is overcome by Frēdōn (Thraētaona), and thereafter there is an upward movement again, culminating, at the end of this 3000-year period, in the birth of Zoroaster, who was 30 years old in the year 9000.

During the next 3000 years this pattern of initial goodness, degeneration and restoration repeats itself broadly three times, giving ample opportunities for both prophecies of woe and messages of hope. Thus the "millennium of Zoroaster" (9000-10,000) begins gloriously with the revelation of the Good Religion to the prophet in his 30th year; but after this golden time other ages follow in progressive stages of decline, down to the iron age of the present with all its moral and cosmic evils.[59] Towards the end of this 1000-year period there will come a rescuer in the shape of Pešōtan,

[55] *ZVYt.* IV.3 (BTA, 17/106).

[56] Ibid., IV.17-19, 45, 47-8 (BTA, 21-31/108-11). Cf. the *Jāmāsp Nāmag*, vv. 26-30 (apnd Bailey, *BSOS* VI, 57-8).

[57] Chadwick, *Growth of Literature* III, 846-7.

[58] Ibid.

[59] It is noteworthy that in *GBd.* XXXIII.12 f. (BTA, 275 f.), in a chapter devoted to the calamities of each millennium, there is no mention of the four (or seven) "times" of the 10th millennium, but simply a straightforward catalogue of disasters.

son of Kay Vīštāsp, who had received the gift of immortality, and thus introduces the leitmotiv of a future saviour born of a man who had lived when the faith was new. Pešōtan, with 150 righteous men, will restore order and the faith, being aided in his struggle by certain of the *yazads*—Nēryōsang and Srōš, Mihr, Rašn, Vahrām, Aštād and Khwarr.[60] The world being thus cleansed again by him, as it had been earlier by Frēdōn for Zoroaster, the way is prepared for the birth of Zoroaster's son, the first Sōšyant, Ušēdar (Ukhšyat.ərəta). He too is 30 years old when his millennium begins in the year 10,000. He will restore the revelation brought by Zoroaster, and all creation will flourish for three blessed years; the wolf-species will disappear, and for ten days the sun will stand still at noon as it did in the time of Creation.[61] By the end of this millennium there is degeneration again—either a coming of enemies to Iran to oppress the state and suppress the Religion,[62] or a great and terrible winter in which man and beast will perish.[63] This is the winter of *Malkūs*, called after Avestan *Mahrkūša*, the "Destroyer", which is the terrible winter which drove Yima into the *var*.[64] With events now coming full cycle, Yima's *var* will be opened again towards the end of the 11th millennium and the world repeopled from it, to create a new golden age for the birth of the second Sōšyant, Ušēdarmah (Ukhšyat.nəmah).[65] Again he will be 30 years old when the new millennium dawns in 11,000; but this time the world is blessed for six years and the sun stands still for twenty days, *khrafstars* perish, and men, growing gentler, eat only vegetables, and finally live only by drinking water.[66] But once again there will be a resurgence of evil. Až Dahāk, fettered at the end of the 8th millennium, will break his bonds and ravage the world, devouring men and beasts, and smiting water, fire and plants;[67] but Karšāsp (Kərəsāspa) will rise up to

[60] See *ZVYt.* VII.19-20, 28 (BTA, 60-1, 65/121-3); cf. *GBd.* XXXIII.28 (BTA, 279); *Pahl. Riv. Dd.* XLIX.12-18 (ed. Dhabhar, 161-2).

[61] See *GBd.* XXXIII.29 (BTA, 279-81).

[62] *ZVYt.* IX.10 (BTA, 75-6/127).

[63] *GBd.* XXXIII.30 (BTA, 281); *MKh.* XXVII.27-31 (West, 31/158); *Dd.*, *Purs.* XXXVI.80 (ed. Dhabhar, 101, transl. West, *SBE* XVIII, 109, as XXXVII.94); *Dk.* VII.8.3 (ed. Sanjana, Vol. XIV; transl. West, *SBE* XLVII, 108 as 9.3).

[64] On Malkūs/Mahrkuša see Darmesteter, *Ét. ir.* II, 203-5 with references; *ZA* II, 24 n. 20. In *Pahl. Riv. Dd.* XLVIII.10 (ed. Dhabhar, 143), the calamity is called the "rain of Malkūs" *(vārān i malkūsān)*. In *GBd.* XXXIII.30 (BTA, 281) Malkūs is treated as a person, and is said to be a descendant of the Tūr *Brādrēs, who killed the prophet (see above, p. 191)—another instance of the schematic linking of persons of the last time by a blood-tie to men of earlier days.

[65] *GBd.* XXXIII.32 (BTA, 281).

[66] *GBd.* XXXIV.2-3 (BTA, 283-5); *Dk.* VII.9.8-9 (ed. Sanjana, Vol. XIV; transl. West, *SBE* XLVII, 114, as VII.10.8-9); *Dd.*, *Purs.* XXXIV.3 (ed. Dhabhar, 71; transl. West, *SBE* XVIII, 77).

[67] *ZVYt.* IX.14-16 (ed. BTA, 77-9/127-8); *Pahl. Riv. Dd.* XLVIII.30 (ed. Dhabhar, 146).

fight him;[68] and Kay Khosrau (Kavi Haosravah) and his comrades, who have been sleeping, will also join in the battle.[69] The way is thus prepared for the birth of the third Saviour, known in the Pahlavi books simply as the Sōšyant, who will be born 57 years before the dawn of Frašegird.[70] (The figure 57 is apparently made up of the 30 years allotted to each of the Saviours, as to Zoroaster himself, before he embarks on his great work, followed by thrice nine, or 27 years, an auspicious number for bringing about Frašegird.) The Sōšyant's guide will be Airyaman;[71] and the sun will stand still for him for 30 days.[72] Thereafter will come the last battle, and the Resurrection. The latter will begin with the raising up of Gayōmard;[73] and when the bodies of all men have been raised up and reunited with their souls, there will take place "the assembly of Isadvāstar",[74] that is, the assembly presided over by the eldest son of Zoroaster, who is thus associated with the work of his youngest and greatest brother. The Last Judgment will take place, the earth be cleansed of evil, and Frašegird be established, so that "the world shall be immortal for ever and ever".[75]

This finished scheme of cosmic history, presented by the Pahlavi books of the 9th century A.C., evidently received its final touches after the Sasanian period. In it the simple grandeur of Zoroaster's own vision of the "three times", with, during the second time, revelation, the spread of the religion and the coming of the Sōšyant, has provided the basic pattern; but this pattern has been heavily elaborated and overlaid. The creation of a detailed chronology appears to have encouraged the proliferation of persons and events to fill the empty millennia; and it is probable that the repetitiveness of this added matter again owed something to the influence of the Babylonian concept of the "great year". The Babylonians believed in the eternity of the world, and thought that the ceaseless influences of the planets brought it about that "at the end of a long cycle of years ... identical phenomena would repeat themselves down endless ages. A human race like our own would be reborn, and individuals endowed with

[68] Ibid. IX.20-21; *GBd.* XXXIII.35 (BTA, 283); *Dk.* VII.9.10 (Sanjana, Vol. XIV, West *SBE* XLVII, 114, as VII.10.10); *Pahl. Riv. Dd.* XLVIII.35 (ed. Dhabhar, 147).

[69] *Dk.*, loc. cit.

[70] The Pahl. passages giving this figure were set together, in Eng. transl., by A. V. W. Jackson, "The 'Fifty-seven Years' in the Zoroastrian doctrine of the Resurrection", *JRAS* 1928, 1-6.

[71] On Airyaman's general part in Frašegird see above, p. 242.

[72] *GBd.* XXXIII.34 (BTA, 283); *Dk.* VII.9.19 (ed. Sanjana, Vol. XIV; transl. West, op. cit., 116).

[73] *GBd.* XXXIV.6 (BTA, 285).

[74] *GBd.* XXXIV.10 (BTA, 287); *Pahl. Riv. Dd.* XLVIII.97, XXXVI.2-3 (ed. Dhabhar, 156, 112-13); *Pahl. Texts*, ed. Jamasp-Asana, 73.2.

[75] *GBd.* XXXIV.32 (BTA, 293).

the same qualities would accomplish exactly the same acts. At the end of one 'great year' another 'great year' would begin, which would exactly reproduce the preceding ones".[76] This is broadly true of the successive millennia of the 6000 years of Zoroastrian cosmic history; but the fusion of orthodox doctrine with what seems to have been an originally pagan prophetic tradition caused the repetitive events to be arranged there in a particular pattern, with what is good being ever corrupted and ever again restored. The incorporation of stories of heroes of old, seen as playing their part in the great struggle against evil, together with allusions to men and events of the Sasanian period,[77] adds to the complexity; and there is further elaboration due to the wish to emphasise that Frašegird is a return to the beginning, so that all great things which have once been known will come again. The general impression which one receives is that the final exposition is the product of long transmission and much re-working in priestly schools, where the learned drew on ancient traditions, but fitted these into new moulds and modified them in the light of later events, and so gradually created a harmonious whole. Memorisation of this must have been helped by the recurring patterns of events, so that the incidents of one millennium could be related to what went before and after. The growth and elaboration of this scheme can be traced from the Younger Avesta down to the Pahlavi books of the 9th century A.C.—a span of perhaps 2000 years. It began, that is, when Zoroastrian literature was orally cultivated and mnemonic patterns were important, and was not completed until after a written culture had been largely established. Once fashioned, it was continually studied and taught by priests; and European travellers still learnt of it verbally from Zoroastrians in Iran in the 17th century A.C.[78] How far the details of the elaborated scheme entered into popular consciousness is, however, doubtful. The Persian epic tells of the 1000-year reign of the evil Dahāk;[79] but with regard to the future the hope of ordinary people seems to have been fixed on the coming of the one Sōšyant, who will be mightily helped, it is believed, by Vahrām, *yazad* of Victory.[80] There is no general awareness that thereafter, according to the scholastics, the whole weary cycle of history must be gone through twice again. Essentially, therefore, it is Zoroaster's own great but simple vision which has continued to inspire his followers, little clouded by the complexities with which clerical learning had sought to enhance it.

[76] Cumont, *RHR* CIII, 1931, 56.

[77] On this see K. Czeglédy, "Bahrām Čōbīn and the Persian apocalyptic literature", *Acta Orient. Hung.* VIII, 1958, 21-43.

[78] See further in Vol. III.

[79] The Sasanian *Khwadāy Nāmag*, the sonrce of the Persian *Shāhnāma*, was, however, itself the work of priests; see this *Handbuch*, I.IV. 2.1, p. 58 with n. 2.

[80] For the part played by Vahrām at the end of the 10th millennium (i.e. the present one) see *ZVYt.* VIII.1 (ed. BTA, 69-70/125). On the blending of belief in Vahrām, god of Victory, with heroic legends of "King Vahrām" see Czeglédy, art. cit.; and the little Pahlavi text ed. by Jamasp-Asana, *Pahlavi Texts*, 160-1, and transcribed and translated by H. W. Bailey, *Zor. Problems*, 195-6.

It has been suggested that the Zoroastrian prophetic literature was most strongly cultivated at times when the faith suffered worldly eclipse, and its adherents most needed to fix their hopes on miraculous intervention, notably, that is, after the Macedonian and Arabic conquests. The *Oracle of Hystaspes*, which survives only in fragments cited by classical authors, may, it is thought, be in origin a part of the literature of the earlier period;[81] and the *zand* of the *Vahman Yašt* was extended during the latter time. Hope in the coming of the Sōšyant remained a vital factor in sustaining the Zoroastrians in their faith under Muslim persecution; and in later times this hope was undoubtedly more ardently clung to by the oppressed Iranis than by their prospering brethren, the Parsis of India.

It is striking that though Babylonian and possibly Hellenic influence (introduced doubtless by the western Magi) is apparent in the later shaping of the prophetic legend, nevertheless the oldest material in it belongs unquestionably to eastern Iran. Zoroaster himself appears to have taught the doctrine of a coming Saviour; and the legend that he was to be born miraculously of the prophet's seed was perhaps fostered by devout princes of Drangiana in south-eastern Iran. The Saošyant's name, Astvat.ərəta, survives from a different dialect than that of the Avestan people, to whom he would have been known as *Astvat.aša; and his legend became firmly attached to the Hāmun lake in the south-east—so firmly that the Magi subsequently either never sought or never succeeded in transferring it to any western waters. The basic legend must therefore have been evolved during the prehistoric period of the faith before the dominance of western Iran, whose scholastics contributed so much to its elaboration; and in its simple, most impressive form it became, with its message of hope, one of the most influential doctrines of Zoroastrianism, affecting, it seems, both Buddhists to the east and Jews and Christians to the west, as well as the adherents of Mithraism and diverse Gnostic faiths.

[81] See, at length, the imaginative study by S. K. Eddy, *The King is Dead, Studies in the Near Eastern resistance to Hellenism*, 334-331 B.C., University of Nebraska Press, 1961.

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE LAWS OF PURITY

Just as belief in the coming Saviour, although so much elaborated in the tradition, has its source in Zoroaster's own teachings, so the many observances designed to maintain purity, although extended and codified down the centuries, are also rooted in his doctrines; for the linking of spiritual and material in the *Gāthās* has the logical consequence that, even as righteousness helps to bring about individual and cosmic salvation on the *mēnōg* plane, so purity and cleanliness, being a caring for the seven creations in their *gētīg* state, also helps to achieve Frašegird. These creations had been brought into being by Ahura Mazdā fair and unblemished; and all that sullies his handiwork—dirt and disease, rust, tarnish, mould, stench, blight, decay—is a part of the weaponry of Aŋra Mainyu, as is the final blow of death. To reduce or banish any of these, therefore, is to contribute, however humbly, to the defence of the good creation, and its ultimate redemption. This basic doctrine is simple and attractive, and it involves every member of the community in fighting the good fight unceasingly through the ordinary tasks of daily life. This is one of the great strengths of Zoroastrianism. The teaching developed many ramifications, however, as generations of priests elaborated codes of conduct in support of it, relating to both actual and ritual cleanliness. Some of the existing regulations probably have their remote origin in Indo-Iranian times, since the Brahmans have similar prescriptions relating to cultic purity; but Zoroastrian rules regarding daily living can be shown to have proliferated down the centuries,[1] and they created eventually an iron code of conduct which had the effect of raising a barrier between Zoroastrian and unbeliever almost as rigid as that which separates the caste Hindu from the rest of humanity. In this code observance was fused with morality, the belief being that "all actions and ways of behaving are either meritorious or sinful",[2] no neutral areas being recognized. There thus persisted in many respects the old Indo-Iranian concept of the nature of transgression, as something to be defined in religious rather than in solely

[1] Since the purity laws are set out repeatedly, and sometimes in works which can be dated, it is possible occasionally to trace the process of elaboration. For one small instance see the *Farziyāt Nāma* of Dastur Dārāb Pāhlan (early 18th century), ed. J. J. Modi, 50 n. 1.

[2] *Pahl. Riv. Farnbag-Srōš*, XXIX.2 (ed. BTA, I 157, II 140).

ethical terms. The existence of the developed Zoroastrian code must have contributed to the failure of the Good Religion to gain converts beyond Iranian borders; for in its stringency it makes demands of a kind to which it is better to grow accustomed from earliest childhood, so that acceptance of them becomes instinctive. Otherwise the requirements may well seem too irksome, the self-discipline needed too strict. As it is said in a Persian *Rivāyat*: "A non-Zoroastrian is not naturally fit for observing the precautions about purity."[3] Since Iranian paganism must have known some of the same rules, the difficulty would have been less for Iranian converts.

In the absence of any early Avestan text concerning such matters, it is impossible to determine which were the original observances of the faith, which later extensions; but since the basic usages must be primal, originating in paganism and strongly reinforced by Zoroaster's teachings, it seems justifiable to treat the whole subject in the present chapter, even though most of the sources are late. The main Avestan one is the *Vendidād*, which deals only with certain of the purity laws; but much additional material can be gathered from various Pahlavi and Persian works, notably the Pahlavi commentary on the *Vendidād*, the *Šāyest ne-šāyest* with its supplementary texts, the Pahlavi *Rivāyat* accompanying the *Dādestān ī dīnīg*, the *Ardāy Virāz Nāmag*, the Pahlavi *Rivāyats* of Ādurfarnbag and Farnbag-Srōš, and the Persian *Rivāyats* of post-Sasanian times. (All the *rivāyats*, so named in Muslim times, consist of the disjointed treatment of a number of religious matters, often in the traditional form of question and answer; and they usually deal with matters of observance rather than doctrine.) Moreover, both the Iranis and Parsis, living as they did in small and in the main isolated communities down to the 19th century, kept the purity laws generally until then, and a number of the ancient regulations are still observed today by the strictly orthodox. This fact makes it possible to study the working of these laws in the living practice of the faith, so that it can be seen how they support spiritual aspirations and moral endeavour, and are themselves a part of the godliness of the devout[4] —of the threefold code thus enjoined in a Pahlavi text: "Men ought to discharge these three duties every day: to ward off the demon of defilement..., to profess the faith, and to perform meritorious acts."[5]

The purity laws derive their strength from their firm doctrinal basis,

[3] Persian *Rivāyats*, ed. Unvala, I 85.3, transl. Dhabhar, 82.

[4] This provides a valuable corrective to an attitude commonly taken towards the purity laws by European scholars, who, finding them uncongenial, have treated them as alien to "true" Zoroastrianism, the product merely of a limited phase of clerical tyranny (usually assigned, because of the date of the final redaction of the *Vendidād*, to the Parthian period).

[5] *Supp. texts to Šnš.* XX.4 (ed. Kotwal, 82).

that is, Zoroaster's dualistic concept of the world as a place of unremitting conflict between goodness, of which purity is a part, and evil, by which that goodness and purity are constantly threatened. Further, the right course of conduct in defence of what is good and pure is codified in relation to the prophet's fundamental teachings about the seven creations. With regard to the inanimate creations, nothing impure should be allowed in contact with them. Metal, the substance of the sky, is to be kept free from rust and tarnish, to shine in beauty and use; and precious metal should not be put into corrupt hands, but as far as possible be given only to the good (this rule is especially to be observed in acts of charity). The lowly earth is to be tilled and cared for, and kept free from all unclean matter. The chief precautions are, however, those to be taken with regard to the vulnerable and deeply venerated elements of fire and water, which are also objects of the Zoroastrian cult; and concerning these there are certain complexities of observance which set adherents of the Good Religion apart from all other men. Water is generally regarded by mankind as a natural cleansing agent; but for the Zoroastrian water, the creation of Haurvatāt, must itself be kept pure, and hence to use it to wash away dirt is an impiety.[6] This cannot be interpreted rigorously in all exigencies of daily life, for, as the dastūrs said resignedly, "In this world we cannot live without sinfulness"; but certain restrictions are carefully observed. Thus no impure objects, such as excrement, or blood-soaked cloths, or worst of all, a dead body, are allowed to come into contact with a natural source of water, such as lake, stream or well; and nothing ritually unclean is washed there. Instead water is drawn off for this purpose, to limit the pollution; and this then is not used immediately, but only after what is impure has first been cleansed with something else. The general disinfectant and cleansing agent which is initially applied is cow's urine, with its ammonia content.[7] This is known in Middle Persian either as *gōmēz*, the literal term, or as *pādyāb*, meaning perhaps "against water", that is, what is interposed between impurity and water.[8] The fact that the Hindus regard all products of the cow as pure and cleansing suggests that this

[6] *Riv.*, Unvala, I 81.15-16, Dhabhar, 77.

[7] For the widespread use among diverse people of urine as a cleanser see, e.g., *A History of Technology* (ed. C. Singer, E. J. Holmyard, A. R. Hall and T. I. Williams), II, Oxford 1956, pp. 215, 355, 368. Of the Iranians Agathias observed, (II. 24, Clemen, 101); "They reverence water more than anything else, even to the extent of not washing their faces in it and of refraining from touching it except to drink it and use it on their plants". The custom of using *gōmēz* for the early morning ablutions was general among the Parsis down to the mid-19th century.

[8] Cf. the apparently related Av. *paityāpəm*, Bartholomae, *Air. Wb.* 840. Among the Iranis *pādyāb* has been reduced colloquially to *pāǰō*.

practice may be Indo-Iranian. In certain cases dry sand or dust is also used, either by itself or, in cases of extreme pollution, after the cleansing by *gōmēz*, as a further barrier between the contamination and the final washing with water.[9] One of the sinners whom Ardāy Vīrāz saw in deepest hell was a man who in life had often washed in "standing waters and fountains and streams",[10] thus distressing Hordād; and it was reported that one of the Sasanian kings was overthrown by the Zoroastrian priests for building bath-houses, "as they cared more for the cleanness of water than for their own".[11] The comment is, however, unjust. Man must keep himself scrupulously clean, for he also is part of the creation of Ohrmazd; but when he is unclean he should not plunge recklessly into the clean element of water, forgetting his duty as steward of this world.

With regard to fire, the general practice of using it to burn up rubbish is unthinkable for the Zoroastrian, who lays only clean, dry wood and pure offerings upon the flames, and who when using fire to cook on takes great care not to let anything spill or drop on to it from the pots.[12] (It was because of his failure to protect the fire when his cook-pot overturned that Kərəsāspa was accused of sin by Ardvahišt (Aša Vahišta) and shut out from Paradise.[13]) Rubbish has therefore to be disposed of in other ways. Dry and "clean" waste-matter (such as sun-bleached bones) may be buried. Otherwise an Irani custom has been for each community to erect a *lard*, a small building with no access except a narrow chimney-like opening in the flat roof, to which steps lead up. Contaminating rubbish is dropped down this opening, and when a certain amount has accumulated acid is poured in to consume it away.[14]

With regard to the living creations of plants and animals also, certain fundamental doctrines need to be grasped in order to understand the working of the purity laws. The world was seen from an anthropocentric point of view, and in the light of the doctrine that for plant, beast and man perfection lay in healthy maturity. The immature being was growing towards that point at which the prototype of its species had been created by Ohrmazd, before birth and death were known; hence for a Zoroastrian

[9] See, e.g., *Riv.*, Unvala, I 237.10 ff., 310 ff., Dhabhar, 239, 294 ff.

[10] *AVN* LVIII.4 (Asa-Haug, 87/185).

[11] See Darmesteter, *SBE IV*, 2nd ed., lxxvii with n. 4 (citing Joshua Stylites).

[12] See *Pahl. Riv. Dd.*, XXXVII.6 (ed. Dhabhar, 115-6). In *Vd.* 8.73-4 it is laid down that if a man deliberately burns carrion on a fire, he should be killed on the spot. The Pahl. commentary adds that brigand, sodomite and criminal taken in the act may also be dealt with summarily, thus setting such wicked people together.

[13] See above, pp. 102-03 with n. 115.

[14] This custom still prevails in the Yazdī area. How far it was general it is impossible to tell.

it is a sin against Amurdād, lord of plants, to cut down a sapling tree, a sin against Vahman, lord of animals, to kill a lamb or calf.[15] Each "good" plant or animal must be helped to grow to its perfection.[16] Thereafter, inevitably," crooked eclipses 'gainst its glory fight", and Ahriman will in the end claim victory through death—but not before plant or beast has been able to make its own small contribution to the cosmic struggle.

What constitutes a "good" plant or animal is assessed solely on the basis of what is useful or agreeable to man. All that is aggressive or repulsive is classed as *daēvic*; and in time a whole double vocabulary developed for good and evil creatures, with regard to parts of the body and essential acts of life, such as moving, seeing, speaking etc.—a usage of which there is no trace in the *Gāthās*.[17] *Daēvic* creatures were naturally considered as unclean in themselves, and to slay them was a positive merit; for there is no sin in bringing death to the creatures of him who created death. The generic Avestan term for them, *khrafstra*, used by the prophet himself,[18] occurs in Middle Iranian as *khrafstar*, or dialectally *frestar*,[19] and in Zoroastrian Persian as *kharfastar*, *kharastar*, *khafastar*.[20] It was applied particularly to insects and reptiles, but could also be used of beasts of prey. One of the professional implements of the Zoroastrian priest, according to the *Vendidād*, was the "*khrafstra*-killer" (*khrafstragan*),[21] which in Pahlavi is called the "snake-killer" (*margan*). This is described as "a stick with a piece of leather attached to the end... Everyone of the Good Religion should possess one, that he may strike and kill evil-working *khrafstars* with it, very meritoriously."[22] In the Pahlavi books "killing *khrafstars*" is set on a plane with "caring for fire, according to the law";[23] for destroying such creatures amounted, in Zoroastrian eyes, to eliminat-

[15] For the injunction against killing a *gōspand* that is less than a year old see, e.g. *Riv.*, Unvala, I 76.6-7, Dhabhar, 71.

[16] The herdsman who has cherished his animals has therefore a place in highest heaven (*AVN* XV.1-8, Asa-Haug 36-7/164), whereas those who have not fed or watered their beasts adequately, or have overworked them, are deep in hell (*AVN* LXXV.5, LXXVII.6-10, Asa-Hang 108/193, 110/194).

[17] See L. J. Frachtenberg, *F. Spiegel Mem. Vol.*, Bombay 1908, 269-89; H. Guntert, *Sb. d. Heidelberger Ak.*, 1914 no. 13; L. H. Gray, *JRAS* 1927, 427-41; T. Burrow, *JRAS* 1973, 132-3. Gray showed that the double vocabulary was in part based on dialect differences, which Burrow sought to interpret as existing between the speech of *ahura-* and *daēva*-worshippers (the latter being, according to him, Proto-Indoaryans).

[18] *Y.* 28.5, 34.5. On the word and its possible etymology, see above, p. 90 with n. 38.

[19] In the Middle Persian of the Manichaean texts.

[20] See, e.g., *Riv.*, Unvala, I 272.7, Dhabhar, 268; J. S. Soroushian, *Farhang-e Behdīnān*, Tehran 1956, 69.

[21] *Vd.* 14.8; 18.2 (on the commentary to which see Darmesteter, *ZA* III, 51).

[22] *GBd.* XXVII.27 (BTA, 239); *Ind. Bd.* XXVIII.22, transl. West, *SBE* V, 109-10.

[23] J. Jamasp-Asana, *Pahl. Texts*, 125.15 ff. In *Supp. texts to Šnš.* XX.5 (Kotwal, 83) "to perform meritorious deeds" is defined simply as this, "that one should kill some *khrafstar*".

ing sources of evil and corruption, and so seemed as unquestionably good as does the destruction of disease-germs and microbes to the rationalist of today—again a wholly anthropocentric activity. Hence it was in the highest heaven that Ardāy Vīrāz saw "the souls of those who killed many *khrafstars* in the world; and the prosperity (*khwarr*) of the waters and sacred fires, and of (all other) fires, and of the plants, and the prosperity too of the earth, was ever increased thereby."[24] Since the practice was both soundly based in doctrine, and corresponded to natural human impulses, it continued down the ages, being first noticed by a *juddīn*, Herodotus, in the 5th century B.C.;[25] and till the mid-19th century A.C. the Zoroastrians of Kerman kept up an annual observance called *kharastar-kōšī*, when members of the community went out into the plains around the city and slew as many *kharastars* as they could, such as scorpions, tarantulas, lizards, snakes, ants, and all else that crept and crawled, pricked, bit or stung, and seemed hideous and repulsive.[26] This observance took place at the feast of Spendārmad, since it is the earth she protects and the crops it produces which suffer most from the ravages of *khrafstars*. The Parsis too keep up certain rites for the "smiting of *khrafstars*" (*khrafstar zadan*) at the festival of this Amešaspand.[27] As well as insects and reptiles, it was also highly meritorious to kill beasts of prey, all of which were regarded as Ahrimanic.[28] A number of wild animals were, however, considered to belong to the *spənta* creation; and should a man kill one

[24] *AVN* XIV.11 (Asa-Haug, 38/163). In the *Farziyāt Nāma*, Modi, 32-3/46, it is said that the Amešaspands asked Ardāy Vīrāz to return to earth in order "to preach the destruction of *kharfastars*, because souls belonging to God are thereby saved, and bodies belonging to Ahriman are destroyed".

[25] I.140; cf. Agathias II.24 (for the practice in late Sasanian times).

[26] Information verbally from Arbab J. S. Soroushian of Kerman (whose grandmother remembered taking part in the observance as a child). For some European travellers' accounts of the "mortal enmity" felt by the Zoroastrians of Persia for *khrafstars* see Darmesteter, *ZA* II, 212 n. 13, 213 n. 15; and further in Vol. III of the present work.

[27] See Anquetil du Perron, *ZA* II, 576-8; Modi, *CC*, 435.

[28] For lists of "kharfastars" see *Riv.*, Unvala, I 272.7 ff., Dhabhar, 268 ff. *Farziyāt Nāma*, loc. cit. Some of these diabolical creatnres, such as the lion, seem to man noble in appearance, and the dastūrs explained that these were created by Ahriman on patterns established by Ohrmazd, whereas the repulsive ones he produced solely to his own designs (see *Riv.*, Unvala, I 273.17-19, Dhabhar, 270). But "whatever kind of *kharfastars* there are, it is necessary to kill" (*Riv.*, Unvala, I 272.12, Dhabhar, 269). There were, however, difficulties with respect to those *kharfastars* from which men derived benefit, e.g. the silkworm and honey-bee. In their case it was said that Ohrmazd in his wisdom had ereated advantage, i.e. silk and honey, from Ahriman's evil creatures. These products could therefore be used. Nevertheless cotton was better than silk "because cotton grows from the earth and is nourished by water"; and eating honey, though generally permissable, destroyed a priest's ritual purity. See *Riv.*, Unvala, I 268.4-8, 16-18, Dhabhar, 265-6; and on cotton cf. *MKh.*, XVI 64-6 (West, 25/151). Another instance of Ohrmazd's power to turn evil to good is that he forces the demon winter to slay *khrafstars* to the benefit of the *spənta* world (Dk. IV. 162.11-12, cited by Casartelli, *Philosophy*, 110).

of these by accident or wantonly, he had the duty to compensate by destroying many *khrafstars*, thus helping to preserve the dominance of the good creation.[29] Moreover, since the destruction of *khrafstars* was good in itself, it might be performed generally, like any other good act, to compensate for both involuntary[30] and deliberate transgressions.[31] Hence "when one smites *khrafstars* one should always say: 'I smite and kill (them) for the sake of ridding myself of sin, for virtue and love of (my) soul'."[32]

Although all *daēvic* creatures are regarded as unclean, the greatest uncleannesses, and those which are therefore the subject of most of the purity laws, are disease and death, which inevitably affect the clean creation of Ohrmazd. What is newly dead, that is, newly conquered by Ahriman, is subject to Nasuš, the she-demon of decay, who settles instantly on the body; and this is the chief single cause of pollution in the world.[33] To bring any putrefying matter, *nasā*, into contact with one of the creations is accordingly a great sin; and in the *Vendidād* it is said that anyone who thus contaminates fire and water gives increased power to spiders and locusts, to fodderless drought and to winter with its deep snows, which slays cattle.[34] Similarly he who, ignoring the ritual prescriptions for disposing of the dead matter of cut hair and nails,[35] sullies the earth with these impure things, engenders there demons, and *khrafstras* that devour corn in granaries and clothing in cupboards.[36] Since anything that has just died is in the highest degree unclean, no orthodox Zoroastrian will willingly touch even a dead fly with his bare hands; and because to crush a large insect on the ground would be to contaminate Spendārmad, Zoroastrian villagers of Iran impale big-bodied beetles and the like with sharp

[29] See, e.g., *Vd.*14.5 ff. The *Pahl. Riv. Dd.* XXIa (ed. Dhabhar, 77) gives a table of the degrees of merit acquired by killing various *khrafstars*; and in XXXIb (Dhabhar, 102-3) are listed a few of the degrees of culpability incurred by killing creatures of the good creation.

[30] *Šnš.* III.21b (Tavadia, 80).

[31] See, e.g., *Šnš.* VII. 9, VIII.19 (Tavadia, 102, 113).

[32] Jamasp-Asana, *Pahl. Texts*, 123.8-10; and in general cf. *Saddar Naṣr* XLIII (Dhabhar, 33-4).

[33] This is treated in detail in *Dd.*, *Purs.* XVI.7 ff. (ed. Dhabhar, 36 ff., transl. West, *SBE* XVIII, 39 ff.).

[34] *Vd.* 7.26-7.

[35] See *Vd.* 17, and on the bird Ašō.zušta above, p. 90. On the ritual see further the Pahl. commentary to *Vd.* 17; *Saddar Naṣr* XIV (ed. Dhabhar, 13-14, transl. West, *SBE* XXIV, 275-6); *Supp. texts to Šnš.* XII.6 (Kotwal, 28); *Riv.*, Unvala, I 244.7-11, 246.13-247.19, Dhabhar, 249-51; *Farziyāt Nāma* (Modi 27/40-1); J. J. Modi, "Two Iranian incantations for burying hair and nails", *J. of the Anthropological Society of Bombay*, VIII, 8, 1909, 557-72. The act of having one's hair cut makes a person unclean, since some of the severed hairs inevitably touch the body.

[36] *Vd.* 17. 2-3.

splinters of bamboo, which they then thrust into mud walls, leaving the *khrafstar* to perish slowly in the air, out of contact with any of the seven creations. This usage, although undeniably cruel, is doctrinally justifiable, since the hapless creatures are regarded as diabolic; and it must be set against the disciplined care and often affection devoted to domestic animals of the good creation.

With dessication dead matter ceases to be *nasā*, and is no longer regarded as contaminating. As it is said in the *Vendidād*, if this were not so, "how soon would all this material existence ... incur deadly sin, so numberless are the bodies which lie here upon the ground".[37] With what is newly dead and decomposing there is a scale of banefulness which is at first sight paradoxical; for the most contaminating of all *nasā* is held to be the body of a righteous Zoroastrian priest, whereas that of an *ašəmaogha*, a "deceiver of *aša*" or heretic, is no more polluting than the year-old dried-up carcase of a frog.[38] The reason for this is again perfectly logical, given the doctrinal premisses. The *ašavan*, who purifies his own being through good thoughts, words and deeds, is both the cleanest of beings and the most powerful agent for cleansing the world around him. Through his prayers, as through those of the prophet himself, "purified will be the houses, purified the fire, purified the water, purified the earth, purified the cow, purified the plants, purified the righteous man, purified the righteous woman, purified the stars, purified the moon, purified the sun, purified the Endless Light, purified all Mazdā-created things whose nature is from *aša*".[39] To bring the impurity of death upon such a man Aŋra Mainyu needs to rally his forces in strength; and they, having triumphed, remain gathered around the body, radiating corruption. The sinful man, on the contrary, is already himself impure, a blight upon the creation of Spənta Mainyu;[40] and a woman of evil life dries up waters by her mere gaze, and withers plants, and deprives the earth of strength, and the good man of much of his *spənta* power.[41] Such wicked people should in theory

[37] *Vd.* 5.7; 8.34. But although dry bones may be buried, still if possible water should not then be allowed to come in contact with them, see, e.g. *Riv.*, Unvala, I 105.13-106.7, Dhabhar, 106-7.

[38] *Vd.* 5.36. Darmesteter (*SBE* IV, lxxviii) deduced from this statement that there was no defilement at all in such a corpse, that since the life of an Ahrimanian creature is incarnate death, it becomes clean by dying. This seems to be taking the point too far, however. Since death in itself is unclean, anything newly dead must be to some extent contaminating (unless it is *gōspand*, see below). The question is one of degree. Thus in the *Rivāyats*, Unvala, I 136.1-4, Dhabhar, 151-2, it is said that there is a wide difference between the *nasā* of Zoroastrians and of unbelievers, but that nevertheless the latter also contaminates.

[39] *Vd.* 11.2.

[40] *Vd.* 5.36.

[41] *Vd.* 18.64.

be slain by the righteous with as little compunction as *khrafstars*, for according to the *Vendidād*, until they are removed from the place of their abiding it will lack "fortune and plenty, health and wholeness, thriving and increase and growth, and the sprouting of corn and grasses".[42] If, however, they are left to live their span, it is small trouble for Ahriman to overwhelm them, already impure, with the further impurity of death, and therefore little *mēnōg* evil attends their taking off. If one were to pursue the logic of this with rigour, one might indeed ask why the Evil One should ever remove through death such useful allies; but perhaps the answer would be that he, like the ancient lord of the underworld, needs to people his realm of hell. The theologians had after all to reconcile their doctrines with the facts of natural processes.

Another doctrinally difficult matter was to harmonize the teachings about death with the meritoriousness of the blood sacrifice; for here the particular tenets of Zoroastrianism had to be reconciled with ancient devotional practice. In this case the Gordian knot was cut simply by formulating the doctrine that the flesh of *gōspand* or beneficent animals,[43] i.e. of those creatures which were killed through sacrifice for food, was not *nasā* but "clean"[44]—a doctrine which accords with natural human assumptions and which (as far as can be judged from the surviving texts) was merely stated, not argued. The meritoriousness of the blood sacrifice is assumed in the *Vendidād* itself, where in one passage it is enjoined that for a particularly heinous offence a man should compensate by sacrificing a thousand *gōspand*, and making offerings therefrom to fire and water.[45]

Edible *gōspand* apart, the force of corrupting power in death was worked out by the Zoroastrian scholastics down the scale of the "good" animal kingdom.[46] The creature nearest to man in dignity and worth is the dog; and a dog's body is accordingly almost as contaminating as that of a righteous man.[47] Even to see one, as to see the corpse of an *ašavan*, without due ritual precautions, robs the beholder of purity. It is possible

[42] *Vd.* 9.55-6.

[43] *Gōspand*, < Av. *gav- spənta-* "beneficent bull", was used as a generic term for all beneficent animals, because they were sprung from the seed of the Uniquely-created Bull, see above, p. 139. Later (by Sasanian times at least) it was used especially for sheep and goats, finally for sheep alone.

[44] See, e.g., *Riv.*, Unvala, I 134.18, Dhabhar, 150. The flesh of dead Ahrimanic creatures is, however, *nasā*. In recent times some Parsi theosophists, having adopted vegetarianism, have ignored the ancient dogma and practices of the faith, and have declared that even the flesh of *gōspand* is *nasā*, and not to be eaten.

[45] *Vd.* 18.70.

[46] See *Riv.*, Unvala, I 254.9 ff., Dhabhar, 256 ff.

[47] See, e.g., *Pahl. Riv. Dd.* XLIV (Dhabhar, 127). In the *Pahl. Riv. Ādurfarnbag* CXVII (BTA, I 65, II 106), it is said that if a dog dies on a road, the road should be diverted or that part of it closed.

to find rational and historical grounds for the Zoroastrian regard for the dog. The herd-dog and watch-dog, which head the list of canine species in the *Vendidād*,[48] must have been man's valued helpers in ancient times on the steppes; and with his qualities of loyalty, obedience and affection the dog undoubtedly seems to have a moral nature, and the capacity of choice. "Respect for the dog" (*iḥtirām-i sag*),[49] so constantly inculcated by Zoroastrians, has thus a reasonable basis; but the part assigned to the dog in religious life, and in the rituals of purification, goes beyond the rational, and leads one to mysterious beliefs connected with the spirit world. Whether these have their origin in myths about the dogs that guard the ways of death it is difficult to tell; but the facts are that orthodox Zoroastrians not only regard the dog as a clean and righteous creature, to feed and care for which is meritorious; they also consider that food given to a dog in the name of someone who has died will nourish that person in the hereafter.[50] Moreover, a dog's gaze is held to be purifying, in that it drives off demons. A dog is therefore regularly present at the great purification of the *barašnom*;[51] and the *sagdīd*, the ceremony of being "seen by the dog" is always enacted with a corpse.[52] Indeed it is said to be rash and highly sinful for anyone to touch a corpse before *sagdīd* has been performed to lessen the infection.[53] (Some still hold that *sagdīd* should also be performed over a dead dog,[54] which is then disposed of with due ritual.[55]) Among the other precautions taken with regard to dead persons is that Avesta is always recited, including invariably the *Srōš bāj*, which embodies the Gathic *Kəm-nā Mazdā*, and is excellent for "smiting Nasuš" (*zadan ī Nasuš*).[56] Physical measures taken against the evil of death include placing the body on a dry and non-conducting surface

[48] *Vd.* 13.17 ff.

[49] See the *Farziyāt Nāma*, Modi, 20-1/30-1. The phrase *iḥtirām-i sag* can often be heard among orthodox Irani villagers, used, for instance, to admonish a boy who looks as if he might be about to cuff or kick a dog.

[50] See above, p. 163.

[51] *Pahl. Vd.* 9.32 (ed. BTA, Bombay 1949, 245); cf. *Vd.* 8.37-8, and see Modi, *CC*, 128 ff.

[52] See *Vd.* 8.16-18, where it is enjoined that the dog should be "four-eyed" (like the dogs of Yama, see above, p. 116), or white with yellow ears. The former kind is interpreted as being a black dog with tan flecks over its eyes, which, *pace* Jackson, *Persia past and present*, 78 is by no means an uncommon type in Iran, at least in the Yazdī area. Any other kind of dog will, however, serve at need for the *sagdīd*, see *Šnš.* II.2, and ff. (Tavadia, 30-2) concerning the *sagdīd* in general. See also at length *Riv.*, Unvala, I 110.18 ff., Dhabhar, 112 ff.; and for current observance Modi, *CC* 58 ff.; Jackson, op. cit., 388-9, 391, 392. For discussions see Tavadia, *Šnš.*, intro., 16-18; A. Kammenhuber, *ZDMG* CVIII, 1958, 300-4.

[53] See, e.g., *Šnš.* II. 63, 65; X.33 (Tavadia, 53, 144); *Riv.*, Unvala, I 145.4-5, Dhabhar, 164.

[54] See *Riv.*, Unvala, I 111.4-5, Dhabhar, 113.

[55] See *Vd.* 8.14; *Riv.*, Unvala, I 110.7-13, Dhabhar, 112. Some of the orthodox villagers in the Yazdī area bury a dog with *kusti* and *sudra*.

[56] *Riv.*, Unvala, I 599.9, Dhabhar, 376. On the texts of the *Srōš bāj* see above, p. 273 n. 90.

such as sand or stone.[57] Lines or *kaš* are then drawn round it to keep the contamination in (as lines are drawn round the *pāvi* or sacred precinct to keep contamination out).[58] A fire is kept alight there, but not nearer than three paces, for its own protection; and fragrant substances such as sandalwood and frankincense are burnt on it—for sweet odours belong to the good creation and help to repel evil. Avesta is recited continually, and two people keep watch by the body until it can be carried to the place of exposure. It is constantly stipulated that no one should touch or lift a corpse alone.[59] There must always be two persons, and they should make *paiwand*, i.e. establish contact with one another, usually by holding a cord or piece of cloth between them.[60] Priests also make *paiwand* in various ways at certain points during the sacred ceremonies; and the underlying intention is presumably the same, to reinforce the *spənta* power of one good person with that of another, in the one case to make worship more effective, in the other to give added strength in the face of evil. Contact is in general very important in ritual matters. If a pure person has even indirect contact with an impure person or object, his purity is vitiated, the baleful influence running like a current between them. The gaze of the eyes can in extreme cases create this contact;[61] and an exchange of words between a clean and unclean person could also, it was held, contaminate the former, though if the utterance were only one-sided it would not.[62]

One of the most impure groups of persons were naturally the professional corpse-bearers, called in the *Vendidād nasu-kaša*,[63] but in later usage *nasā-sālār* ("master of the corpse"). In the *Vendidād* it is enjoined that these men should do their work naked,[64] evidently to reduce contamination; but it seems unlikely that this injunction was literally intended or ever wholly obeyed. In known usage the corpse is laid on an iron bier, called *gāh-āhan* "throne of iron", metal being chosen as less apt than

[57] *Vd.* 8.8. On later practice see Darmesteter, *ZA* II, 120 n. 10; Modi, *CC*, 54; Jackson, op. cit., 390-1. Things are regarded by Zoroastrians as becoming "more or less deeply defiled according to their degree of penetrability" (Darmesteter, *SBE* IV, lxxxi). Hence the corpse should be placed on hard stone rather than on the soft earth or porous brick.

[58] For this and the following acts see *Riv.*, Unvala, I 136.11 ff., Dhabhar, 152 ff.; *Farziyāt Nāma*, Modi, 34-9/47-56, Modi, *CC*, 53 ff.; Jackson, op. cit., 388 ff.

[59] See, e.g., *Šnš.* II. 63, 85, 106, 108b (Tavadia, 53-67); *AVN* XXXVIII.6 (Asa-Haug, 69/177 with n. 2).

[60] See *Riv.*, Unvala, I 89.19 ff.; Dhabhar, 93 ff., and passim in connection with the removal of *nasā*; Modi, *CC*, 53.

[61] See, e.g., *Riv.*, Unvala, I 145.11-13, Dhabhar, 165.

[62] See, e.g., ibid., Unvala, I 131.19-132.6, Dhabhar, 147. In the *Pahl. Riv. Ādurfarnbag* CXXXV (BTA, I 70, II 113) it is laid down that a man cannot talk with a woman in menses without incurring "sin".

[63] I.e. "corpse-carrier". Another Av. word is *iristō.kaša* "carrier of the dead".

[64] *Vd.* 8.10.

wood to harbour contagion;[65] and the *nasā-sālārs* keep special clothes to be worn only for their work, and washed thereafter with *gōmēz* and water. They also cover their hands with cloths; and when they put off these professional garments they wash themselves from head to foot with *gōmēz* and water, before returning to their homes. They must moreover recite a certain number of Avestan prayers during their work, for their own protection. Nevertheless, however many precautions the *nasā-sālār* takes to limit contamination, the fact that he is necessarily and continually in contact with *nasā* makes it inevitable that other members of the community should shrink a little from him, as people shrink from someone with an infectious disease. Communal behaviour towards the *nasā-sālār* has probably varied considerably at different places and times, but in known practice he is not allowed, while actively employed, to approach sacred fire or shrine (though he may do so, if after giving up his work he undergoes the greatest of the purifications and becomes clean again). He is not welcome on auspicious occasions, such as initiations and marriages; and though in some communities he is allowed to attend the *gahāmbār* feasts, from which no Zoroastrian should ever be turned away, he is then served his food apart, having brought his own cloth and utensils with him.[66] Often, however, even at these great festivals food is simply sent to his home—in generous quantity, for he is an essential and in his own way a valued member of the community. At home too he eats apart, from separate vessels, avoiding *paiwand* with his family;[67] and he does not himself tend the hearth fire, or light a lamp, but asks someone else to do these things for him.[68] Nor is it desirable that he should till the soil, thereby bringing uncleanness upon Spendārmad. The calling thus imposes many restrictions, and has been usually undertaken, one would imagine, because of poverty and need. Nevertheless, a devout man can find pride in it, being as it were a soldier in the front of battle, exposing himself but by rigorous care protecting from evil both the creations and his fellow-believers.

With such beliefs one might have thought that, when circumstances

[65] Illustrations of two types of iron bier, given in one of the Persian *rivāyats*, are reproduced by D. Menant, *Conférences au Musée Guimet, Bibliothèque de Vulgarisation* XXXV, 1910, 182, 183.

[66] On the isolation of the *nasā-sālār* in the Irani community see Jackson, op. cit., 392. Such practice was maintained in (for example) Sharifabad in Iran down to the 1960's, though some urban communities (e.g. Karachi) had relaxed such usages several decades earlier.

[67] This again is Sharifabadi observance.

[68] These restrictions were almost certainly general, but are particularly recorded of Navsari (in the unpublished notebooks of Ervad Phirozeshah M. Kotwal, early 20th century, for knowledge of which I am indebted to his grandson, Dr. Firoze Kotwal).

permitted, Zoroastrians would readily have employed *juddīns*, that is, those of another faith, who in their eyes were already unclean, to dispose of corpses; but this is in fact strictly forbidden, on the ground that unbelievers, who do not observe the laws of purity, might, having performed this task, carelessly approach water and fire without first cleansing themselves; and this would be a sin for which the Zoroastrians, employing them, would be responsible. Better, therefore, that they should take the contamination on themselves, and carefully control it.[69]

The other chief cause of pollution, apart from *nasā*, is all that leaves the living body, whether in sickness or in health, the bodily functions and malfunctions being alike regarded, it seems, as *daēvic* in origin, perhaps since they are associated with change and mortality rather than with the static state of perfection. What issues from the body (not only excrement, but also blood, dead skin, cut nails and hair) is sometimes comprehended in the Pahlavi books under the term *hikhr*;[70] and to allow *hikhr* to reach water or fire is no less heinous than to permit *nasā* to do so.[71] With the logical elaboration of this doctrine, daily life became hedged about with regulations, some of which affect even its "good" aspects. Thus marriage with begetting of children is a positive good; but the emission of semen, in intercourse and otherwise, is polluting.[72] Orthodox priests to this day undergo *barašnom* after the marriage night, which with the breaking of the hymen has its additional impurity; and thereafter husband and wife should both bathe after intercourse, for which certain *mąthras* are moreover prescribed.[73] *Pollutis nocturna* is naturally impure, and if it should occur during a priest's initiation, this is held to show that the candidate is unworthy, and he is not allowed to proceed.[74] The ban is absolute and life-long. An occurrence during the *barašnom* retreat gravely disrupts the purification.[75]

[69] *Riv.*, Unvala, I 144.8-10, Dhabhar, 162-3.

[70] See, e.g. *Pahl. Riv. Dd.* LV.3 (ed. Dhabhar, 165-6); *Riv.*, Unvala, I 38.12-17, Dhabhar, 35.

[71] Thus one of those whom Ardāy Vīrāz saw in hell was a woman who had put hairs upon the fire (*AVN* XXXIV, Asa-Haug 65/176). In the Persian *Rivāyats* the expression "*nasā* of the living" is used also as a synonym for *hikhr*, see Unvala, I 82.14 ff., Dhabhar, 79; and in the Avesta *hikhra* is applied to polluting matter from corpses (*Vd.* 5.14,16), so that the usages of the two words are by no means distinct or clearly defined.

[72] On nightly pollution see *Vd.* 18.46-52; *Riv.*, Unvala, I 193, Dhabhar, 207; *Farziyāt Nama*, Modi 18-19/27-8. In the later Indian texts also certain expiations were prescribed for it, see W. Gampert, *Die Sühnezeremonien in der altindischen Rechtsliteratur*, Prague 1939, 150 f.

[73] See Boyce and Kotwal, *BSOAS* XXXIV, 1971, 311 with n. 101.

[74] See Modi, *CC*, 196 n. 1.

[75] For details see Modi, *CC*, 137. (If it occurs during any night of the *barašnom* required before the celebration of the exalted ceremony of *Nīrangdin*, this annuls the ritual entirely.) Men accordingly sleep little during the *barašnom*; and it is one of the few privileges of

Any flow of blood also affects purity, since it is a breach in the ideal physical state. If a priest has a scratch that bleeds he may not solemnise a sacred ceremony; and in the strict orthodoxy of the post-Sasanian period to swallow one's own blood from a drawn tooth was polluting.[76] This doctrine of the impurity of blood is one that has pressed hard on women, for in consequence her monthly courses make every woman unclean. During these days, therefore, she has had to withdraw from her family as strictly as possible, sitting apart in some dark corner from where her impure gaze could not fall on the good earth, or running water, or fire, or the sky and sun and moon, or plants and animals, or the righteous man.[77] During this time she must wear old (though scrupulously clean) clothes set apart for this purpose,[78] sleep alone on old bedding, and eat sparingly of plain food[79] served to her from a distance on a special plate[80] (as in the case of the *nasā-sālār*); not taking part in domestic tasks (unless perhaps sewing or patching some garment that can be thoroughly cleansed and washed thereafter), and assuredly never preparing food for herself or others, since this would be direct contamination of Hordād and Amurdād. (The souls of women who had transgressed in this way were seen by Ardāy Vīrāz in deepest hell.[81]) Tiny children have to be kept away from their mother by coaxing or force, and if she is nursing a baby, this in its turn becomes unclean through the necessary contact.[82] In sum, a woman during this time, however virtuous, and however strict in her general observance of the rules of purity, is regarded as being as impure as a harlot, and as blighting to the good creation. These harsh usages

Zoroastrian women among the orthodox to be left to sleep peacefully during these nights, while the men are awakened from time to time to watch and pray.

[76] On such matters see *Riv.*, Unvala, I 249.7 ff., Dhabhar, 252 ff.

[77] See *AVN* LXXII. 4-8 (cf. XX.5), *Šnš* III.27-9. The restrictions upon a woman at this time are set out in detail in *Vd.* 16, and reproduced with amplifications in *Šnš.* III. See also *Saddar Naṣr*, XLI, LXVIII (transl. West, *SBE* XXIV, 302-5, 332-4); *Saddar Bd.* XCVI (transl. Dhabhar, *Rivāyats*, 568-70); *Riv.*, Unvala, I 205 ff., Dhabhar, 211 ff.; *Farziyāt Nāma*, Modi 9-10/15-16; Modi, *CC*, 161-6. On the tiny windowless hut in which the Yazdi women used to pass these days down to the early decades of the present century see Boyce, "The Zoroastrian houses of Yazd", *Iran and Islam, Studies in memory of V. Minorsky*, Edinburgh 1971, 139. *Vd.* 16.1 ff. enjoins setting a place apart where a woman in menses went; this was later termed *dāštānistān*, see e.g., *Šnš.* II.75 (where it is evidently within the dwelling-house, as in later practice). Further, *Riv.*, Unvala, I 207.3 ff., Dhabhar, 213-14.

[78] It is repeatedly said that clothing which has been heavily contaminated may after thorough purification and washing be set aside to be used for this purpose, see *Vd.* 5.56-9 and, e.g., *Riv.*, Unvala, I 136.7-9, Dhabhar, 152. Respect for the good creation leads Zoroastrians to thrift, and nothing should be needlessly thrown away, see *Vd.* 5.60.

[79] See *Vd.* 16.7, and the passages cited above on the rules for women in menses.

[80] See *Vd.* 16.6.

[81] *AVN* LXXVI. 6-7 (Asa-Haug, 109/193).

[82] *Vd.* 16.7.

probably represent elaborations of ancient restrictions inherited from Iranian paganism, of a kind widespread among the peoples of the world; and again, given the Zoroastrian premisses, the line of thought is logical, the practice consequent. Zoroastrian women have suffered much under them, yet the orthodox observe them voluntarily, with both resignation and stoic pride. The rules are stern, to observe them is often a struggle, but they are part of the fight against evil, and so to be strictly kept. This attitude of mind enables self-respect to be maintained in spite of humiliating restrictions.[83] The menopause marks a welcome cessation, however; and still in the orthodox Iranian villages a pious old lady will then sometimes undergo the *barašnom* purification annually three, six or nine times, year after year, and will keep her purity as strictly as a temple priest, rejoicing in being wholly and perpetually clean at last, and able thus to prepare herself for eternity.

Although pregnancy gives a woman respite from the restrictions attendant on menstruation, yet child-birth too is regarded as a heavy pollution, requiring isolation, with similar observances, for 40 days;[84] and a yet greater contamination, still much dreaded by the orthodox, is to bear a dead child, for this means that the mother has carried *nasā* within her body, and the rituals of purification enjoined for this are rigorous and prolonged.[85] It is laid down, moreover, that for the first three days she should not drink the pure creation of water, but instead *gōmēz*, in order to cleanse the "grave" (*dakhma*) within her;[86] and even in winter she must not approach fire, unless the cold is so sharp as to endanger her life.

Compared with these regulations, the precautions which hedge hair and

[83] In general women have a dignified position in the Zoroastrian community, as men's partners in the common struggle against evil, and this appears due to Zoroaster's own teachings (see above, p. 251). As in other religions, however, the attitude of the male tends to be inconsistent. The Christian has considered women now as sisters of the Virgin Mary, now as the tribe of the temptress Eve. So the Zoroastrian looks on woman now as *ašavan*, the creature of Ohrmazd, and now as corrupted and suborned by Ahriman to be his impure ally. Thns the Creator is once represented as saying to woman: "Thou art a helper to me, for from thee man is born, but thou dost grieve me who am Ohrmazd", *GBd.* XIVa (BTA, 137; transl. also by Zaehner, *Zurvan*, 188). There is no reason, however, to regard this as a general or standard Zoroastrian attitude, still less (*pace* Zaehner, loc. cit.) to consider it as typically Zurvanite, or on the grounds of the whole passage in question to identify the *ašavan* woman with the whore, who is specifically said there to be her Ahrimanic opposite.

[84] *Saddar Naṣr* XVI.4 (ed. Dhabhar, 15, transl. West, *SBE* XXIV, 277); *Riv.*, Unvala, I 223-4, Dhabhar, 224-5. Here again the purity laws produce a seeming anomaly, for, as Darmesteter observed, one might think that a woman just delivered of a child "ought to be considered pure amongst the pure, since life has been increased by her in the world, and she has enlarged the realm of Ormazd. But the strength of old instincts overcame the drift of new principles" (*SBE* IV, lxxix). Birth had had, however, no place in the perfect world created by Ohrmazd, and will be unknown after Frašegird. It belongs therefore wholly to this world of Mixture, and so could logically be treated as in part *daēvic*.

[85] See *Vd.* 5.45-64; *Saddar Naṣr* LXXVII; *Riv.*, Unvala, I 227 ff.; Dhabhar, 227-34.

[86] *Vd.* 5.51; see Darmesteter's comment, *ZA* II, 80 n. 86.

nail cutting are minor ones. The trimmings are regarded as dead matter, *hikhr*, as soon as they are severed; and orthodox usage is to carry them carefully in a scrap of old cloth to some place apart, either to a barren piece of ground, or a special building (the Irani *lard*), well away from water or fire. The bearer rolls up the sleeve and holds the small bundle well away from the body. On reaching the place appointed he (or she) sets the bundle down, takes the *bāj* of Srōš and, if it is on open ground, draws three furrows round it, reciting one *Yathā ahū vairyō* for each furrow, and then the special *mąthra* prescribed (namely *Vd.* 17.9) before casting dust over it and departing.[87] In modern times a strictly orthodox Zoroastrian visiting a barber will put on an old *sudra* and *kustī* kept for this purpose; and on leaving the barber's shop he will return home directly and be admitted by some watchful member of the household so that he does not have to touch the door or anything else before taking a bath. Strictly orthodox Parsi households also often keep an iron chair for a barber's visits to the house, for it is not regarded as proper to sit on porous wood when undergoing this contamination.

Breath leaving the body is also regarded as polluting, which is why priests engaged in high rituals cover the mouth. Saliva too is naturally unclean, and Zoroastrians are scrupulous not to spit. The orthodox will not drink from any vessel touched by another's lips, or eat from a common dish;[88] and food and drink should be partaken of in silence. (This is partly also out of respect for Hordād and Amurdād, guardians of water and plants.) Sneezing, yawning and sighing are also deprecated, and are to be checked as far as possible.[89] Such rules, coupled with their care to keep wells and streams clean and impurities off the fields, have in recorded times preserved Zoroastrian communities in health while epidemics have raged around them.[90] Zoroastrians are required to pass water squatting, not standing, as a sanitary precaution;[91] but it is permissible to put night soil on fields (although not, it was ruled by the dastūrs in Islamic times, that which came from the households of unbelievers).[92]

[87] For references see above, p. 300 n. 35.

[88] See, e.g., *Riv.*, Unvala I 350.14-351.2, Dhabhar, 312-3, Modi, *CC*, 159-60.

[89] See, e.g., *Supp. texts to Šnš.* XII.32 (Kotwal, 39).

[90] On the relatively low mortality rate in the Parsi community see D. F. Karaka, *History of the Parsis* I, 95-6.

[91] See *Vd.* 18.40; *AVN* XXV.6; *MKh.* II.39; *Saddar Naṣr*, LVI.1-5. The same prescription is obeyed by Muslims.

[92] *Riv.*, Unvala, I 38.12-40.9, Dhabhar, 35-7, where it is said that night-soil should be left in the open for 4 months before being put on the fields. (Cf. *Pahl. Riv. Farnbag-Srōš* XXVI (BTA, I 156, II 138), where, however, 6 months are stipulated.) Cow-dung was pure, coming from the pure animal, unless the cows were owned by unbelievers, who "do not take precautions about anything" (*Riv.*, loc. cit.).

Apart from ritual requirements, to maintain simple physical cleanness is a basic duty for a Zoroastrian, for cleanliness is an absolute good, a characteristic of Ohrmazd's creation; and unless the believer is clean in in body as well as soul, his good works, it is said, do not accrue to his account.[93] Before each of the five daily prayers, the Zoroastrian should wash face, hands and feet[94] (a prescription adopted, with the times of prayer, by Islam). To do this he first unties the *kustī*, then washes, then reties the *kustī* with the appropriate prayers; and the whole observance is therefore called *pādyāb-kustī* (to distinguish it from the simple rite by which a person, being already ritually clean, unties and reties the sacred cord without ablutions).[95] Before taking part in any major act of worship, public or domestic, the Zoroastrian must wash the whole person, from head to foot, and put on fresh clothes, so as to be physically clean for the spiritual purification of the rite. Any uncleanness debars him from taking part in a religious ceremony, or from entering a holy place; and since no unbeliever keeps all the Zoroastrian purity laws, no one of another faith is allowed to be present at a religious service, since his uncleanness would mar it and prevent it reaching the divine beings. (It is presumably for this reason that the idea gained currency that the Zoroastrian priestly rites were mysterious and shrouded in secrecy; but this is not so. Participation is open to all believers, men and women, old and young, learned and ignorant, provided only that they are in a state of purity.) Cleanliness extends also to places of abode; Zoroastrian houses are always well swept and dusted, and before a high festival or family holy day everything is brushed, washed or scoured with especial zeal.

The doctrine that one mnst be pure to approach the divine beings gave rise to the rule that the grossly unclean should not say even their private devotions. In the *Vendidād* this restriction is applied equally to the woman in *menses* and to anyone afflicted with a physical injury. Neither may raise their hands in prayer.[96] Later the Persian expression "a woman without prayer" (*zan-i bī-namāz*) came to be a standard circumlocution for a woman in her monthly courses.[97] The doctrine that physical injury and defects also were inflicted by devilish agency, "the mark of Aŋra Mainyu

[93] See, e.g., *Šnš.* VII.7 (ed. Tavadia, 101-2).

[94] See *Supp. texts to Šnš.* XX.5 (Kotwal, 83); *Riv.*, Unvala, I 310.19-315.17, Dhabhar, 294-9; *Farziyāt Nāma*, Modi, 3-5/4-8; Modi, *CC*, 87-9.

[95] Since *pādyāb-kustī* is now always performed with water (except, among the strictly orthodox, on rising), the Parsis have come to interpret *pādyāb* as meaning "pure water"; but among the Iranis the word, as *pāǰō*, retains the sense of *gōmēz*.

[96] *Vd.* 5.59, with Pahl. commentary. See Darmester, *ZA*, II 83 with n. 97.

[97] There are perplexing passages in *Šnš.* (i.e. III.7, 9, 35), which seem to require prayer from a woman in menses; but living Zoroastrian practice is in accord with the *Vd.* ruling.

set on men", meant that the priests themselves were required to be physically perfect. A deformity or disfigurement was permanently disabling professionally, just as a wound was temporarily so. Because of this, locally at least, a candidate for the priesthood, having passed all other tests, had to present himself naked to the priestly college before acceptance into its ranks.[98]

The orthodox laity, going about their daily work, keep the rules of purity as fully as they can; but they look to their priests to observe these with even greater rigour, to be "cleanest of the clean" (*pāk-i pāk* in Persian idiom), in order that their prayers may be the more effective. This must have been the case down the centuries; and it is probably partly to preserve their stricter rule of life that Zoroastrian priests have tended to live somewhat apart from the laity. The priest's purity is built up, on the basis of physical cleanliness, through the many holy rituals in which he takes part; and it is so much greater than a layman's that until recently a priest would not eat food prepared by a Zoroastrian layman, still less by a *juddīn*;[99] nor would he eat while having *paiwand*, a physical link, with anyone else, such as would be created by a common cloth,[100] for this would bring the danger that, while performing this nearly sacramental act, he might be brought unwittingly into contact with some uncleanness. (Thus the priest in his purity segregates himself as strictly in this respect as the *nasā-sālār* in his impurity, but for the opposite reason.) Careful isolation was practised in this regard by priests even among themselves; and naturally at all times they sought to avoid physical contact with those of lesser cleanness. Even in the laxer usage of today a priest keeping the highest ritual purity will not form *paiwand* with a *juddīn* by handing him something directly, but will set it down and retreat a little before the other picks it up. In general the orthodox Zoroastrian maintains his ritual purity by strict self-discipline, and is watchful lest it should be vitiated through his own or others' carelessness.

Yet, despite vigilance, contamination cannot be wholly avoided in a world where Ahriman is at work; and so a number of different means of purification had to be devised, to meet various needs. These are all based on a threefold process: the recital of Avesta (by both the ministering priest and the person being cleansed), which brings to bear the purifying power of the holy word; an inward cleansing, through drinking *nīrang*

[98] This was the custom in Yazd down to the early decades of the present century, see further in Vol. IV.

[99] See, e.g., *Riv.*, Unvala, I 575.11-15, Dhabhar, 346-7.

[100] This precaution was generally maintained by Parsi priests down to the beginning of the 20th century, and is still observed by those keeping the highest ritual purity.

(consecrated bull's urine) with a pinch of ash from a pure fire;[101] and an outward cleansing with *gōmēz* (unconsecrated urine, from cow or bull), followed (either directly or after the additional use of sand) by a washing of the whole person with water. Since until this washing is complete there may be a vestige of uncleanness lingering, the candidate cannot plunge into water, or even touch a vessel containing this pure liquid; and so instead water is poured over him, from head to foot, by whoever is administering the rite. It seems to have been this part of the basic purification ritual which was originally known as *barašnom*, a Middle Iranian word deriving from Avestan *barəšnu-* "top, head". Later this term came to be used as an abbreviated name for the most elaborate of the cleansing rites; and the ablution itself is now called by the Iranis descriptively *ōwerakht* "pouring of water". For the simplest of the threefold cleansings the Zoroastrians adopted in Islamic times the Arabic term *ghusl* "bath", pronounced by them *ghosel*;[102] but later the Parsis came to apply this word to a particular contamination (*pollutis nocturna*) which requires this cleansing,[103] and nowadays the various purification rites are generally known among them as *nāhn* (the Gujarati word for "bath"), the *ghosel* proper being called *sade nāhn*. Apart from its use to remove specific contaminations, the *ghosel* or *sade nāhn*, which may be administered without elaboration in the home, is regularly given to children about to put on *sudra* and *kustī* for the first time, so that they may enter the religious community wholly clean; and to the laity and women of priestly class before marriage and before the great holy days of the faith, or particular days of family observance, when complete purity is sought.[104]

When there has been a more serious, known contamination, which in Persian idiom makes a person *rīman* "unclean", a more elaborate purification should be administered, namely the *sī-šūy* or *sī-šūr* "30 washings".[105] This too may be undergone at home; but since there is pollution present, the priest keeps a careful distance, the *rīman* being isolated by entering an enclosure cut off by a *kaš* or furrow, drawn (like the *kaš* round a corpse)

[101] In an Avestan passage (*Vd.* 5.51) these cleansing agents are given simply as *gəuš maēsmana ātryō.paiti.iristəm* "a mixture of ashes with bull's urine"; and this has two Pahlavi glosses regarding the ash, one of which is *var i ātakhš i kadagi šāyēd* ("ash of the house fire is proper"), the other *var i ātakhš i varahrān šāyēd* "ash of an Ātaš Bahrām is proper").

[102] See Anquetil du Perron, *ZA* II, 545.

[103] See, e.g. *Farziyāt Nāma*, Modi, p. 18.13.

[104] See Modi, *CC*, 90-5 for a full description of the rite and the occasions for administering it among the Parsis.

[105] On this rite see *Riv.*, Unvala, I 135.1-7, Dhabhar, 150 with n. 3; Anquetil du Perron, *ZA*, II 548-50.

to pen in the contamination.[106] There seem to have been a number of local variations in the details of this purification, but the following Yazdī method contains its essentials: after the *rīman* has drunk *nīrang*, in the three prescribed ritual sips, the priest passes him, one after the other, the three agents for outward cleansing—*gōmēz*, sand and water— in a ladle at the end of a long stick with nine "knots" in it (usually a bamboo with nine rings), pouring each of these into his cupped hands from above, so that there is no *paiwand* between them. Each agent is given nine times, making twenty-seven "washings" in all; and then finally pure water is poured over the *rīman* three times from head to foot, thus making up the "thirty washings", after which he is once more "clean".[107] In recorded times this purification appears to have been chiefly administered to women after childbirth, in which case the actual cleansing was done by a woman of priestly family, while the priest himself recited the appropriate *mąthras* close by.[108] It is still so undergone in some of the orthodox Yazdī villages, where it is also occasionally given to men as well;[109] but among the Parsis by the beginning of this century it was already, it seems, very largely replaced by the *sade nāhn*.[110] It is said that in Kerman the *sī-šūy* was undergone annually by women before the festival of Spendārmad, the *yazad* who cares for them especially; and orthodox Parsi women still make a practice of taking the *sade nāhn* before this feast.[111]

For heavy contaminations, in the main through contact with *nasā*, a prolonged ritual of purification was imposed, called the *barašnom-i nō šaba* "the bathing of the nine nights".[112] Among the Iranis this is referred

[106] For a plan of the *kaš* for *sī-šūy* see Anquetil, *ZA* II, Pl. XIII, opp. p. 546. In Iran some confusion has developed of recent years between the *sī-šūy* and the *barašnom-i nō šaba*, for the former rite, although still administered at the home, is now given with the elaborately drawn *kaš* proper to the *nō-šwa*. (The writer witnessed this in 1964.)

[107] For a different form of administration (though whether that of Kerman or Surat is not clear) see Anquetil, *ZA* II, 548-50.

[108] See *Riv.*, Unvala, I 601.2-5, Dhabhar, 380. This is also the practice when *nō-šwa* is administered to a woman. The argument was, however, advanced in the past that the actual gaze of the *pāk yōždāthragar* was essential to purification, just as it is essential to consecration in the high rituals, the priest being in the position of healer.

[109] In 1964 the writer met one young man who had undergone it that year in the village of Mazra' Kalāntar, near Yazd. In Kerman, however, it was regarded then as a rite solely for women.

[110] The rite is not even mentioned by Modi in his *Ceremonies and customs* (first published in 1922).

[111] For this in modern times they usually go to a fire temple, making, it is said, a charming sight when they emerge again, "pure" and radiant, like a flight of butterflies in their lovely *saris*.

[112] This rite is so important that there are ample descriptions of it. See *Vd.* 9; *Riv.*, Unvala, I 585.6-609.13, Dhabhar, 358-93; Anquetil, *ZA* II, 545-8; Modi, *CC*, 102-41; Darmesteter, *ZA* II, 163; West, *SBE* XVIII, 431-54. Again there are local variations in its administration (on some of which see P. K. Anklesaria, *Sir J. J. Madressa Centenary Vol.*, Bombay 1967, 162-4), but the basic ritual as laid down in the *Vendidād* remains con-

to familiarly as *nō-šwa*, whereas the Parsis call it simply either *barašnom* or *nāhn*.[113] For this, because of the extent of the pollution, the initial cleansing, that is the *barašnom* proper, must be administered in a place apart, called the *barašnom-gāh*, a term contracted among the Parsis to *barsingō*. This should if possible be some barren, desolate spot, remote from water and fire, plants, the creatures of Vahman and righteous men. In recorded usage this place has always been enclosed by a wall, ostensibly to keep in the pollution; but since this can be done effectively by ritually-drawn *kaš*, it may be rather to secure privacy amid a *juddīn* population. The *barašnom-gāh* is always roofless, however, so that it is open to the purifying rays of the sun; and traditionally it is round, so that there are no dark corners for contamination to lurk in.[114] Two priests should engage in the task of cleansing, and one should hold a dog by a metal chain, so that the animal's gaze may help to banish the impurity. The cleansing takes place inside a ritual precinct within the *barašnom-gāh*, created by surrounding a small area with a series of elaborately-drawn *kaš* made, with recital of Avesta, in such a way as to form a firm barrier against pollution.[115] In ancient times nine holes (*magha*) were dug within this precinct,[116] in which the *rīman* squatted naked to undergo the process of purification, becoming gradually cleaner as he moved from one to the next. Later the holes were done away with, and the nine stations came to consist simply of nine stones, or sets of stones, laid on the surface of the ground. (A simpler arrangement of stones is used also in the *sī-šūy*, the purpose in both rites being presumably to keep the contamination away from the earth.[117]) A common idiom among the Iranis today for undergoing *barašnom* is accordingly to "go on the stones"; and sometimes, if the purification is administered around noon, this can in itself be something of an ordeal, as they become blistering hot in the rays of the midday sun. After the ritual drinking of *nīrang*, the *rīman* is purified "on the

stant. An attempt to simplify this in the 9th century A.C. provoked in rebuke the *Epistles* of Manuščihr, a high priest of Pars.

[113] Since these same two terms are used by them on occasion also for the *ghosel* or *(sade) nāhn*, it is not always clear from their writings which purification is in fact meant.

[114] For a description of the *barašnom-gāh* of Yazd at the beginning of this century see Jackson, *Persia past and present*, 383. The old *barsingō* at Navsari, just outside the little town, was likewise a round enclosure (information from Dr. Firoze Kotwal).

[115] In most of the descriptions of the *barašnom*-rite cited above a plan or plans are given of this ritual enclosure. For plans showing different ways of arranging the furrows and stones in Iran and India in modern times see *Riv.*, Unvala, I 587, 588, 600.

[116] Nyberg's attempt (*Rel.*, 147 ff.) to associate this word with Gathic *maga* (see above, p. 250) has not met with acceptance.

[117] Possibly therefore the practice of doing away with the holes and laying the stones on (rather than in) the ground may have been adopted as Zoroastrian priests pondered ever more earnestly on how to guard the "creations" from contamination.

stones" with the three agents of *gōmēz*, sand and water. The administering priest again passes these to him with the nine-knotted stick, as in the *sī-šūy*, avoiding all physical contact; and he stands carefully outside the furrows which surround the stones.[118] The manner in which the *rīman* is to apply the three agents to his naked body, from head to foot, is exactly laid down in the *Vendidād*, and the ancient prescriptions are still strictly followed.[119] After he has passed over all the nine stations, and is freed from impurity, the candidate steps out of the *kaš* on to a tenth stone, where pure water is poured over him from head to foot. He then puts on fresh white garments, retying his *kustī*; and thereafter he withdraws to some clean, secluded place, the *barašnom-khāne* or *nāhn-khāne*, where he lives apart for the next nine days and nights, observing the strictest rules of physical cleanness, and the greatest respect for the "creations". He also devotes much time to prayer. Three times during the retreat, on the fourth, seventh and ninth days, in the same *gāh* or watch in which the initial *barašnom* was given, a priest administers to him a simpler ablution, called the *navšūy* (apparently "washing of the nine (nights)"),[120] which may take place either in the open or under a roof. For it the candidate goes on to a set of three stones, within a threefold *kaš*, and afterwards puts on newly-washed garments, which have been washed by a "clean" person in pure water.[121] Throughout the retreat the candidate must be looked after by a "clean" person, his *parestār* or attendant, who supplies his meals[122]—which he must eat in clothes kept especially for this purpose only, with gloves on his hands, and using a metal spoon, so that respect is scrupulously shown to Hordād and Amurdād. The strictest precautions are taken too not to touch the earth, Spendārmad, with bare foot or hand; and all physical contact, *paiwand*, is avoided with any other person, so that no impurity may be transmitted—although there is no bar to pleasant and indeed merry conversation, for cheerfulness is always encouraged by the Good Religion. Sitting by day or sleeping by night the candidate is

[118] For a photograph of a candidate "on the stones", with the two administering priests and the dog, see D. Menant, "Sacerdoce zoroastrien à Navsari", *Conférences au Musée Guimet*, 1911, 273; reproduced by M. Molé, *L'Iran ancien, (Religions du Monde)* Paris 1965, following p. 97; and by J. Bauer, *Symbolik des Parsismus, Tafelband (Symbolik der Religionen)*, Stuttgart 1973, p. 123.

[119] The cleansing "on the stones" is, however, now largely symbolic, and rapidly performed. (Through the generous permission of a woman candidate, the writer was allowed to witness the rite in Sharifabad, Iran, in 1964.)

[120] See Modi, *CC*, 138-9, Dhabhar, *Riv.*, index s.v. *nav-shu*.

[121] In Iran it is now required that this should be done by a young girl who has not yet begun her monthly conrses; but this seems an elaboration, since it is unknown in India.

[122] This and what follows describes Irani usage, since the fact that the Parsis now limit the rite to priests has somewhat altered matters in India.

allowed only one thin cloth or quilt between himself and the ground;[123] and if he is a man, he will not be allowed to sleep much, but will be roused from time to time by his *parestār*, for a nocturnal pollution during the first three nights vitiates the whole rite, and all must be done again. There are thus considerable rigours to the retreat; and the young and energetic moreover often find the confinement irksome. Nevertheless even lay people, less accustomed than priests to such restraints, are usually influenced, as the time passes, by the quiet discipline of these isolated days, filled with prayer and godliness (for to a Zoroastrian cleanliness, it has been observed, is not next to godliness, but a part of it); and they emerge from their seclusion with a true sense of purification and a renewal also of the spirit.

There are various pollutions which make this prolonged rite necessary, most of them involving contact with a corpse. Such pollution may be incurred through acts of neighbourly kindness—a woman attending a sick-bed, a man helping to move a dead body—and it may involve quite young children. (In Iran it is the custom, locally at least, that the body of a still-born baby is carried to an unconsecrated place of exposure by two children who have not yet attained puberty, two boys for a male infant, two girls for a female.[124]) Moreover, possibly in post-Sasanian times (for it is not recorded in any old treatise) the ideal was set that every member of the community should undergo *barašnom-i nō-šaba* at least once in his or her life in order to purge away the physical contaminations of birth[125] —a logical extension of the general way in which birth was regarded; and, down to the present century, this was the common practice in Iran among the better-off, who would gather a group of young cousins and friends to pass the retreat together soon after they had been invested with the *kustī*. Although the strict discipline of the rite was enforced, the time was nevertheless made to pass pleasantly and cheerfully for these young candidates.[126] In yet other instances, it was not so much the removal of a

[123] In India this practice is less austere, with a special mattress, leather-covered, being used for the purpose.

[124] This is the practice at Sharifabad. There the infants' bodies are carried several miles to the Kūh-i Surkh, at the approach to the mountain sanctuary of Herist. The bearers are usually elder brothers or sisters or cousins, escorted by the father or other close relative, so that the proceeding is in every way distressing for those concerned. In one of the *rivāyats* it is, however, enjoined that even a still-born child that has lived in the womb up to 4 months and 10 days should be carried to the *dakhma*, see *Riv.*, Unvala, I 234, Dhabhar, 234-5.

[125] See *Riv.*, Unvala, I 605.12-14, Dhabhar, 387.

[126] Information from Khanom Banu Isfandiyar (mother of Arbab Jamshid Sorushian) who underwent the rite early this century with about 15 other youngsters, brothers, sisters and cousins. Their *parestār* was her aunt Sultan, who was married to the famous Mobad Rustam Jehangir, *dastūr-i buzorg* of Kerman, see Vol. IV.

particular impurity which was aimed at, but rather an increase of existing purity for some special purpose. Thus, as we have seen, elderly people sometimes seek through undergoing this rite to end their days in a state of the utmost physical cleanness as well as spiritual grace; and since priests cannot perform any of the high rituals effectively without full purity, they necessarily undergo *barašnom* many times in their lives, both before initiation and repeatedly thereafter as a required preliminary, a renewal of perfection, for the highest ceremonies.[127] The importance of purity in Zoroastrianism is shown by the fact that a name for priests qualified to perform the "inner" rituals is *yōždāthragar* "he who makes pure."[128]

There is a possibility of undergoing the *barašnom* rite vicariously, either for the living or the dead. Thus sometimes still in Iran a devout person will go through it for a relative who has committed the grievous sin of taking his or her own life, or for one who has been drowned or burnt to death. If it is a case of suicide by drowning or burns the sin is doubly heavy,[129] and water is not then used at all in the cleansing, but *gōmēz* is applied throughout. This inflicts a severe penance, because the ammonia remaining on the skin for nine days is irritating, especially in hot weather;[130] but this is plainly not the intention behind the practice, which is rather to guard the pure element of water from contact with such deep pollution, even though the rite is being undergone by proxy. Then among the living there are some, such as busy merchants and farmers, who even when they incur pollution are reluctant to make time for this period of enforced inaction; and they pursue what seems a long-established practice of paying others to undergo the purification on their behalf. Naturally the purer the person thus employed, and the more scrupulously he performs all the rituals and observes all the restraints, the more efficacious the act is likely to be; and so it is priests who are generally resorted to as substitutes. This development reached such a point among the Parsis that in the course of the 19th century their priests gradually ceased to administer *barašnom* at all to the laity; but they themselves, if *yōždāthragars*, still

[127] On some of the ways by which a priest's *barašnom* can be vitiated see Modi, *CC*, 141-5. The list he gives is by no means exhaustive; yet in the past in an enclosed Zoroastrian community (such as, for example, the Parsi wards of the little town of Navsari) disciplined and watchful *yōždāthragars* managed to preserve the purity of a single *barašnom* for decades.

[128] Av. *yaožداthra* "purification", see Bartholomae, *Air. Wb.* 1235.

[129] See *Pahl. Riv. Ādurfarnbag*, CXXX, CXL (BTA, I 69, 73, II 111, 116). Even accidentally to let any part of oneself be burnt by fire, or scalded by hot water, is sinful, see *Pahl. Riv. Dd.*, XXXVII.11, 13 (ed. Dhabhar, 116-7).

[130] Information from a Tehrani woman who had thus undergone *nō-šwa* in Sharifabad in 1963 for a niece who had committed suicide by drowning in Bombay.

undergo it frequently, both for their own sakes and on behalf of others.[131] (When a priest takes the purification for himself he is said to do so *pāk-tan*, that is, in order to become himself "of clean body".) As a corollary of this development (whereby the rite is only undergone by those already pure), and also because the Parsis do not now live in separate town wards and villages, the *barašnom-gāh* or *barsingō* is no longer isolated in India, as of old, but is now within the compound of a fire temple, as is the *barašnom-khāne*. This has the practical advantage that after the initial purification the candidate can go directly to the place of the nine nights' retreat without risk of new contamination through contact with *juddīns*. (In the city of Yazd, where the old *barašnom-gāh* remained in use until the 1950's, candidates used to have to wait there till darkness fell, when they could pass through empty lanes.) The temple *barašnom-gāhs* of the Parsis are usually rectangular rather than round, thus fitting more easily into the general lay-out of courtyard and building. In Iran *barašnom* was given generally up to the early decades of the present century; and in Yazd and some of its villages the rite is still administered by one or two priests to those of the laity, men, women or children, who seek it—usually a score or so annually. The Parsi priests still administer the *rīmanī barašnom* in a place apart to the really contaminated (notably *nasā-sālars*) who need more than the proxy purification.[132]

It seems that in the past, after Zoroastrianism had become a state religion, and its adherents were therefore the heterogeneous mass that makes up the population of any large country—rich and poor, devout and sceptical, strenuous and lazy—the practice prevailed whereby those who wished and had the means could compound any of their offences, whether against morality or the laws of purity, by money-payments. These were made either to procure vicariously a restoration of purity, as in the case of the *barašnom*-practice just described, or to atone for sins through the celebration of religious services. It seems probable that the detailed physical punishments for various transgressions (so many strokes of the whip) which are listed in the *Vendidād* were elaborated simply to provide

[131] The link between employer and proxy is close. The death of the former not unnaturally brings the rite to an end; but also if the employer is a woman, and her monthly course begins at the time, the rite must be broken off, and begun again afresh thereafter. See Modi, *CC*, 190-1.

[132] See *Riv.*, Unvala, I 559-601, Dhabhar, 378-380; Modi, *CC*, 145-9. The drawing of the *kaš* is simpler, but greater precautions than ever are used to prevent contact between the ministering priest and the *riman*; and instead of a second priest the assistant, among the Parsis, is a layman (necessarily less pure), who performs the actual *barašnom* or water-pouring at the end, when it is necessary to approach the *riman* closely. With their modified usages the Parsis do not require the *rīmanī barašnom* to be followed by the nine nights' retreat; but among the Iranis the purified *riman* goes through this like everyone else.

a scale for such money payments, in terms of which they were interpreted.[133] This system was plainly open to abuse, like the selling of pardons in medieval Christendom; and it appears remote from the strenuous moral teachings of the prophet himself.[134] It has nevertheless its logic, and one can see how it must gradually have developed: the performance of the high rituals was meritorious, since it helped the good creation, and only priests could solemnize them. To pay them to do so was therefore a virtuous act, requiring self-denial or at least some liberality on the part of the penitent; and it weighed accordingly in the scales of judgment against the sin which he had committed. If enough services were performed, the wrong-doing could be wholly counterbalanced. The case for vicarious purification is more difficult to justify; but presumably the practice began with the *barašnom* being performed for the benefit of the departed, after which the analogical argument could be advanced that if the dead could be cleansed by proxy, why not the living also? In general the belief that rites and prayers can aid the dead seems wholly alien to Zoroaster's teaching of each man's responsibility for his own fate; but it is in accord with the ancient Indo-Iranian tradition of caring for the souls of one's kindred, and seeking to help them, and it should therefore presumably be regarded as a tempering of the prophet's doctrines to the emotional and pious needs of less strong natures, in accordance with old-established customs and observances. Christian and Muslim practices of interceding for the dead seem no more nor less soundly based.

Another method of cleansing the soul from sins, including sins of pollution, was by confession. This was not practised in the hope of obtaining thereby forgiveness from God for evil done, but rather as an act of value in itself, an acknowledgement of failure which, with the intention to amend, constituted good words and thoughts, and so partly counterbalanced the fault (though since actions weigh more than thoughts and words, confession is not enough in itself to cancel out bad actions). The Pahlavi word for "confession," *patīt*, comes from Avestan *paitita*, meaning "expiation".[135] In the Pahlavi books confession of sin is repeatedly

[133] For Pahlavi tables converting the apparently ancient punishments for sins into a series of money-fines see F. M. Kotwal, *Supp. texts to Šnš.*, Appendix I (pp. 114-5). In the *Pahl. Riv. Dā.* XVb. 4 (ed. Dhabhar, 43) it is said of sins: "Everyone who is able should pay (in cash)".

[134] There were, however, serious attempts to reconcile belief in the efficacy of rites on behalf of the dead with Zoroaster's own teachings. See, e.g., *Dā. Purs.* VII (ed. Dhabhar, 23-5, transl. West, *SBE* XVIII, 26-8), where it is said that benefit accrues to the soul of the departed only if the man when living had either ordered the rites, or intended them. Otherwise they do not help him. More generally, on the expiation by a son of the sins of his father see *Pahl. Riv. Ādurfarnbag*, CXLI (BTA, I 73-4, II 116-7).

[135] See Bartholomae, *Air. Wb.* 829. The Zoroastrians now pronounce the word *patēt*.

urged, and four formularies exist for this purpose.[136] These are relatively long works, all much alike, and in their present form probably post-Sasanian in date. In living Zoroastrianism their use is confined to specific occasions when purity of soul and body is especially sought, as at marriage, or the beginning of the new year, and in connection with *barašnom* and other purification rites. A *patīt* is also always recited on behalf of the dead during the three-day ceremonies, for "the *patīt* serves as a wall before hell".[137] As for the living, "the case of sin is like the case of a good deed. Like the good deed, which from the moment one performs it, and as long as a man lives, grows bigger every year, sin likewise grows bigger every year; but when one makes confession, it no longer increases. It is like a tree which withers and makes no more growth".[138] The confessional texts, regarded in this light, are thus beneficent *mąthras* designed to limit the effects of bad actions.

The doctrine behind the use of confessionals may in fact be very old, like the concept of the *mąthra* itself, even though the existing *patīts* are late in form; for very much the same beliefs and practices are to be found in ancient India. In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (II. 5.2.21) it is said: "When confessed, the sin (*enas-*) becomes less, since it becomes truth (*satya-*)." Confessional verses of a general character are found already in the Rigveda, as in one famous hymn to Varuṇa (*RV* 7.86), where the following lines occur: "Set us free from the misdeeds (*drugdha-*) of our fathers, from those that we ourselves have perpetrated" (v. 5). There are similar lines in *RV* 7.89.5: "Whatever wrong we men commit against the race of heavenly ones, O Varuṇa, whatever law of thine we here have broken through thoughtlessness, for that sin (*enas-*) do not punish us, O god".[139] Prayers for deliverance occur in the Atharvaveda, from which the following verses have been cited as typical: "If knowing, if unknowing, we have committed sins (*enas-*), do ye deliver us, O Viśvedevāḥ, from that, accordant. If waking, if sleeping, I, sinful, have committed sin, let what is and what is to be deliver me from that...".[140] Such Vedic verses were used with longer

[136] For three of these formularies see Dhabhar, *Zand-i Khūrtak Avistāk*, text Bombay 1927, transl. Bombay 1963. Confession in Zoroastrianism has been discussed by R. Pettazoni, "Confession of sins in Zoroastrian religion", *J. J. Modi Mem. Vol.*, Bombay 1930, 437-41; J. P. Asmussen, *Xuāstvānīft, Studies in Manichaeism*, Copenhagen 1965, Ch. 2. That confession was a form of reparation inferior to a physical act is made clear in *Pahl. Riv. Dd.* XVb 4 (ed. Dhabhar, 43).

[137] *Farziyāt Nama*, Modi, 4.27-8/7. The pious dastur here enjoined that each night before sleeping one should recite a *patīt*, or at least say: "I repent and turn back from every sin that I may have thought or spoken, committed or intended."

[138] *Saddar Naṣr* XLV.3-5 (ed. Dhabhar, 35).

[139] Cited by Rodhe, *Deliver us from evil*, 154.

[140] Ibid., 148 (*AV* 6.115).

confessional texts in various expiatory rituals;[141] and these latter are characterised by the use of general expressions of contrition and by the desire "to embrace all imaginable cases of committed sins".[142] In this and in their ritual use these texts resemble the Zoroastrian *patīts*; and though this similarity must arise from parallel developments, it seems probable that the basic practice of acknowledging sin goes back to Indo-Iranian times, belonging perhaps especially to the worship of the Asuras. There is no reason, moreover, to think that it would have been unacceptable to the prophet, in so far as it was done by living men in contrite admission of their own failures. Confession on behalf of the dead must, however, be a later extension of the practice, for it breaches Zoroaster's fundamental teaching that each man is directly responsible for the fate of his own soul.

The four existing *patīts*, like the Indian confessionals, strive to be all-embracing in their lists of sins committed; and all begin, in full orthodoxy, with acknowledgement of transgressions against the seven Amešaspands and their creations: "...against the Lord Ohrmazd and man... Vahman and cattle... Ardvahišt and fire... Shahrevar and metals... Spendārmad and earth... Hordād and water... Amurdād and plants."[143] There follow long lists of many kinds of wrong-doing, which include both moral failures, such as sins of pride and wrath, sloth, envy, malice and the like, and offences against the purity laws; for to the Zoroastrian morality and purity are inextricably intertwined, and it is their joint pursuit which makes up the good life. As the priests declared: "Our religion is bound up with purity."[144] In former times the use of the confessionals was not confined to fixed occasions, but was enjoined also for atonement for particular acts. Thus in one of the Persian *rivāyats* it is laid down that if a woman who has had a still-birth is in danger of dying, she may be given water to drink while yet uncleansed, or be brought near a fire, in wintertime, for warmth; but her husband must make confession on her behalf to mitigate the sin she has thus committed against two of the creations.[145] In general a husband might confess on behalf of his wife, or a father on behalf of a child under 15 years of age;[146] but otherwise vicarious confession was permissible only for the dead.

[141] See W. Gampert, *Die Sühnezeremonien in der altindischen Rechtsliteratur*, Prague 1939, 191; Rodhe, op. cit., 141.

[142] Rodhe, op. cit., 157.

[143] See, e.g., *Patīt ī khwad*, 5; *Patīt pašīmānīg*, 8 (Dhabhar, *Zand-i Khūrtak Avistāk*, text, 80-1, 58-9, transl. 151-2, 110-11).

[144] *Riv.*, Unvala, I 252.11, Dhabhar, 254.

[145] *Riv.*, Unvala, I 229.6-8, Dhabhar, 229, in contrast with *Vd.* 7.70-2, where it is simply said that a penalty (*čithā*) must be paid if she drinks water in these circumstances.

[146] See *Pahl. Riv. Dd.* LIII (Dhabhar, 164).

The laws of purity were naturally observed with great strictness in connection with the religious rituals, since failure to keep them would render these invalid. The *pāvi* itself is often referred to, in Muslim times, as the *pāw-mahal*[147] or "pure place"; and the fully-qualified priest, as we have seen, is commonly called *yōždāthragar* "purifier". Before any "inner" ritual begins, the *pāvi* itself must be made pure, and every vessel and utensil is subjected to a threefold process: first they are scoured with clean water and wood ash, then washed with the purest possible water (drawn with great care from well or running stream), before being finally consecrated with sacred words. The technical terms now used are that the objects are made first *ṣāf* (clean),[148] then *pāw* (pure), and finally *yašte* (consecrated). No impure object can ever be consecrated, and to recite Avesta over something which one knew to be impure would be a sin. If after these preparations are completed anything should break the ritual isolation of the *pāvi* (such as man or beast stepping into it), the whole process is vitiated, and the cleansing, washing and consecrating must be repeated from the beginning.

Both while making these preparations and while performing the actual *pāw-mahal* services Parsi priests (being naturally themselves in a state of complete physical and ritual cleanness) wear spotless white garments which are strictly functional, with none of the impressiveness of the flowing robes which they wear for the "outer" services.[149] The short-sleeved sacred shirt, girt in with the *kustī*, is worn with close-fitting trousers, so that there is no loose fold of cloth to brush against any consecrated object. (The priest at certain points of the ceremony consecrates his own right hand, but his person and clothing as a whole are only clean, not pure.) His head is covered, concealing the hair (for a loose hair would pollute anything it fell on);[150] and nose and mouth are veiled by the *paitidāna*, Middle Persian *padān*, now a piece of fine cotton cloth like a surgeon's mask, which prevents the breath reaching consecrated objects.[151] (Representations of the Achaemenian period indicate, however, that originally only

[147] A mixed Arabo-Persian term, whose second element should, strictly, be written *maḥal*.

[148] An Arabic term adopted in the Islamic period.

[149] Irani usage has been obscured by poverty and oppression, and the subsequent strong influence of the Parsis. No representation survives from ancient times which can be certainly identified as showing Zoroastrian priests engaged in the "inner" rituals of the *pāvi*, as distinct from public ceremonials.

[150] All orthodox Zoroastrians used until the 19th century to keep the head covered by day and night, and priests still observe this general rule.

[151] In the *Pahl. Riv. Dd.* XXXVII.3 (ed. Dhabhar, 115) it is enjoined that anyone speaking close to the hearth fire should hold something before his mouth and nose, so that his breath does not reach the fire.

the mouth was covered, and not the nose.) It is not only this "mask" which suggests a likeness between a *pāw-mahal* priest and a surgeon. In general the stringent isolation of the *pāvi*, and the precision of the performance of rituals there, invite comparison with the operating theatre, with its discipline and strictly observed hygienic rules. The priest himself, like the surgeon a skilled and dedicated craftsman, concentrates utterly on the work in hand. Both men have trained assistants to help them; but as for others who may be there—as worshippers in the one case, observers in the other—their presence is strictly irrelevant, and does not affect the efficacy of what is being done, although they may themselves benefit from attending.

The Zoroastrian priest solemnises the *pāw-mahal* services with scrupulous exactness, in purity of intention, word and act. Thereafter what he has consecrated from the vegetable and animal creations he gives as offerings to pure sources of fire and water. A part may also be consumed by those present as worshippers (who must themselves be wholly clean), or poured out on the clean earth beneath trees; and the *barsom* tie and the fibres of the pounded *hōm* twigs, once dry, being themselves both pure and consecrated, are placed on the fire within the *pāvi*,[152] so that they too are absorbed by one of the creations.

Since none of the high rituals may properly be performed except by priests who have the purity conferred by the *barašnom-i nō šaba*, this purification is considered by them the basis of their professional lives; and since *barašnom* cannot be administered without certain "tools" or "properties" (now termed *ālāt*), these too are highly regarded. The chief of these are held to be consecrated bull's urine and wood ash, with which the inner being is cleansed. No ritual is needed to consecrate the ash, for both hearth fire and temple fire are hallowed through the daily recital of prayers; but there is a special religious service for consecrating the bull's urine, and this has come to be regarded as the most solemn of all *pāw-mahal* observances. The ceremony was termed in post-Sasanian times *nīrang ī āb ud pādyāb yaštan* "the liturgy for consecrating water and bull's urine"; but already by the 15th century it was generally referred to more simply as *nīrang-i dīn*, *nīrangdīn*, "*the* liturgy of the faith";[153] and the consecrated *pādyāb* itself had come to be called by transference simply *nīrang*, the commonest usage today. The long ceremony is performed only by thoroughly experienced priests, who prepare themselves for it carefully,

[152] This appears to continue ancient, probably Indo-Iranian usage, see above, p. 167 with nn. 133, 134.

[153] See Unvala, *Rivāyats*, I 576.1-2.

with an especially strict and stringent *barašnom*; and of the *pādyāb* itself, once consecrated, it is said in a Persian *rivāyat*: "It is thus evident from a book in the Pahlavi language that the life of religion is from *nīrang*, and the life of *nīrang* is from the high priest, and the life of the high priest is from meritorious deeds and a virtuous disposition... *Nīrang* is that which is prepared by dastūrs with *varas*, *hōm*, *urvarān*, *parahōm*, *mānthra* and *zand* and the *barsom*; for though the body be black as charcoal, if it (i.e. *nīrang*) be given for drinking, then the light of God settles on it, and it becomes pure and bright like the sun."[154]

Even though this passage attributes a magical efficacy to *nīrang*, the insistence that this efficacy depends on its preparation by virtuous priests keeps it Zoroastrian in spirit, though the emphasis shows that it belongs to a late period in the history of the faith. In general Zoroastrianism pursues purity with morality, morality with purity, in accordance with the prophet's basic teachings about the physical and spiritual worlds, and their interdependence. Probably therefore the seed at least of all the observances described in this chapter existed already in the religion's earliest days, being in part indeed an inheritance of pagan usages, maintained by the Good Religion as a weapon in the struggle against the physical assaults of evil.

[154] *Riv.*, Unvala, I 487.16-488.1, Dhabhar, 333. On *varas* (the hair "sieve") see further in Vol. III.

EXCURSUS

THE ZOROASTRIAN FUNERAL RITES

What evidence there is about the funeral rites of pagan Iran[1] suggests that among various Iranian peoples the princes and nobles had adopted the custom of laying the embalmed bodies of their dead within a large tomb, a rite which may have been connected with an aristocratic hope of salvation in Paradise, with resurrection of the body hereafter. There is some reason to think that exposure of the dead was first adopted by Iranians in Central Asia;[2] and whether or not this rite was actually evolved by Zoroaster, the likelihood seems that the prophet himself chose it as that of his own faith, this being one of the measures which revelation gave him the courage to foster or introduce. There are a number of ways in which it accords with his doctrines. Firstly, the body is laid in the open under the life-giving sun, which makes a path of light to draw the soul upwards to the Činvat Bridge. In Zoroastrian tradition it is *hvarə.darəsā*, or, as it is expressed in Persian, *khoršēd nigāreš* "beholding by the sun", which is stressed as the chief merit of exposure.[3] The sun's rays, beneficent for the *spənta* creation, are also powerful to burn away the pollutions of the body, which in death belongs to the *daēvic* powers. Moreover, by exposure to birds and beasts the corrupting flesh is itself swiftly destroyed—sometimes in minutes rather than hours—and there is no sullying of the creations of earth or fire or water. Further, in its harshness the rite marks a disdain for the *nasā* which the soul has abandoned; and its simplicity accords with the universal character of Zoroaster's message, since it levels all men in death, naked alike beneath the sky.

Scriptural authority concerning the disposal of the dead is all contained, as far as the Avesta itself is concerned, in the *Vendidād*; and since this work is a compilation, containing diverse matter from different periods, it is not surprising to find some contradictions, in terminology at least, between various sections.[4] One passage (*Vd.* 7.47-51) refers to different ways of disposing of the dead, in a manner which suggests that when it

[1] See above, p. 109 ff.
[2] See above, p. 113.
[3] See above, pp. 113-4 with n. 26.
[4] For an analysis of the relevant passages see H. Humbach, "Bestattungsformen im Vidēvdāt", *KZ* LXXII, 1958, 99-105; A. Kammenhuber, "Totenvorschriften.. im Vidēvdāt", *ZDMG* CVIII, 1958, 304-7.

was composed the characteristic Zoroastrian rite was far from being generally adopted, let alone enforced. In it Zoroaster is represented as questioning Ahura Mazdā about the bodies of the dead—how long it is before a corpse which is laid upon the ground, in light and sunshine, returns to dust; how long before one which is buried in the earth; and how long before one which is placed in a *dakhma*. The answer is respectively one year, fifteen years, and not until the *dakhma* itself crumbles away. Therefore, it is said, it is a great merit to destroy *dakhmas*, and the man who does so turns his sins to good. Similarly in *Vd.* 3.9 it is declared that that part of the earth feels sharp distress on which *dakhmas* are thickly set, *dakhmas* in which corpses of men are laid; and once again (3.13) the merit is urged of destroying these "built-up *dakhmas*" (*dakhma- uzdaēza-*). These passages attest the use of the word *dakhma* in the sense of a mausoleum or raised tomb within which the body is artificially preserved. This is close to what seems to be its original meaning of "grave",[5] and suggests that in substance these sections of the *Vendidād* are old. In yet another passage, *Vd.* 7.56-8, such *dakhmas* are described as places of corruption where *daēvas* (that is, demons) gather, befouling them and generating disease and further death.

There are other passages in the *Vendidād*, however, where the word *dakhma* is used in a quite different sense, that is, for an open place of exposure, lawful and approved. In *Vd.* 8.2 it is enjoined that when a man dies Mazdā-worshippers "shall search for a *dakhma*, they shall look for a *dakhma* all around". There is nothing in the context to establish what precisely is intended, whether an artificial structure or simply a suitable natural place for exposing the body, but the latter seems more likely. Unfortunately the same is true of the only other passage where *dakhma* is used in this sense. This is *Vd.* 5.14, where it is said that Mazdā-worshippers should let bodies lie for a year under the sun, so that rain may fall upon the carrion (*nasu-*), upon the *dakhmas*, upon the impurity (*hikhra-*), and so that birds may devour the flesh utterly. The rain-water, it is said (5.14,16), which has fallen first upon the uncleanness, and then upon the bare bones, flows back in the end to the sea Pūitika and there is cleansed again.

As to what is then to be done with the bones, sun-bleached and rain-washed, the *Vendidād* (6.49-51) allows a choice according to individual means. "Where" (it is asked) "shall we carry the bones of dead men, where lay (them) down?"; and the answer is: "An *uzdāna-* shall be made, out of reach of dogs and foxes and wolves, not to be rained on from above by

[5] See above, p. 109.

rain-water. If they shall be able, these Mazdā-worshippers, (let it be) among stones or chalk or *clay. If they are not able, let it (sc. the skeleton) be laid down, being its own couch, being its own cushion, upon the earth, exposed to the light, seen by the sun". *Uzdāna* (which occurs in only one other passage) appears to be a technical term for an ossuary, that is, the receptacle in which bones were finally placed;[6] and though, because of obscurities in vocabulary, the *Vendidād* passage is far from clear, it is probable (to judge from later practice) that in it the word was applied either to a cist cut in mountain or hillside ("among stones or chalk"), or to a casket or urn. *Uzdāna* is rendered mechanically in Pahlavi as *uzdahist*,[7] and is glossed by *astōdān* (literally "bone-container"). Ossuaries of all these diverse types are well known from historical times.

The custom sanctioned in the *Vendidād* for the poor, of simply letting the dry bones rest upon the ground, is not one which archaeology can confirm, but is in fact attested by foreign observers during both the Parthian and Sasanian periods. Theologically the practice was acceptable, since being then "clean" the bones could not harm the good earth; and the Zoroastrian dastūrs insisted that it was within the power of the Creator, who had made each single man, to reassemble his most scattered parts at Frašegird.[8] The use of ossuaries to preserve individual bones was therefore helpful rather than necessary. This usage was nevertheless one which satisfied natural piety, and established a place where individual rites for the dead could be performed; and since it has parallels in ancient India (with the gathering up and eventual interment of bones after cremation), it may well have existed already in the prehistoric period. To make the procedure possible, it must have been necessary to expose corpses separately; but as far as places of exposure are concerned, the *Vendidād* simply

[6] It seems likely that this word was coined when the "Avestan" people adopted the rite of exposure. The other passage in which it occurs is *Vd.* 8.73-4, which runs: "O Creator .. if the Mazdā-worshippers .. come upon a fire on which carrion *(nasu-)* is being cooked—the carrion is being cooked or roasted—how should they act? Then said Ahura Mazdā: "They should kill the one cooking the carrion *(nasu-pāka-)*, they should remove this cooking-pot *(dištā-)*, they should remove this *uzdāna-*". *Dišta* is an ordinary word for pot or cauldron (Pers. *dēz*, see Bartholomae, *Air. Wb.* 748), and *uzdāna* seems to be used in the parallel phrase to express disgust at a cooking vessel being thus degraded to become as it were an ossuary. There is no need, however, to go further and to interpret the passage as referring to cannibalistic practices in Achaemenian or Parthian Iran. To the Zoroastrians any dead "Ahrimanic" creature was *nasu-*, and to cook and eat it was to pollute both the fire and oneself. This gave the barb to the Iranians' taunt that the Arabs were "lizard eaters"; and the likelihood is that the present passage refers to similar practices among, perhaps, certain aboriginal peoples, who may have eaten a number of things (snakes, frogs, lizards and the like) which Zoroastrians regard as unclean.

[7] This is a purely formal "translation", with *uz-* repeated, and *-dāna* rendered here as elsewhere by *-dahišt*.

[8] See *Zādspram* 34.1-7 (BTA, 136-7, cxvi; Zaehner, *Dawn*, 317, and above, p. 236).

enjoins that the bodies of the dead (*naraṃ iristanaṃ tanu-*) should be carried to the highest places, where carrion-eating animals and birds were known to abound; and there they should be fastened down by the hair and feet (with iron, stone or horn), so that the bones should not be dragged about. The reason given for this is, however, that it is to prevent them being taken near water or plants, not so that they should remain in one place to be gathered up. There is no evidence, therefore, archaeological or literary, for artificially-constructed places of exposure in ancient times; and none for the existence of stone towers of the type of the modern *dakhma* before the Islamic period.

The old pagan idea that burial in the ground was a way of despatching the soul to the kingdom of the dead beneath the earth evidently lingered on in connection with the Zoroastrian doctrine of hell, as is shown by yet another passage of the *Vendidād* (*Vd.* 3.35). Here a curse is laid on him who "does not give as is right and good from his labour to the righteous man [i.e. the priest]... Let him be thrust into the darkness of the earth (*Spənta- Ārmaiti-*), into the place of corruption [i.e. the grave], into the worst existence, on to all beds of arrows". Plainly if a body were buried, the spirit was thought to have little chance of finding its way upward to the sun-path which leads to heaven above.

Naturally, given the nature of the sources, it is impossible to trace the history of the Zoroastrian funerary rites; but the essential ones were probably evolved in the early days of the faith, for the instinct to perform religious ceremonies at this solemn moment appears universal. Further, since Zoroaster seems to have accepted the age-old belief that the soul lingered on earth for three days after leaving the body, this period was naturally one for especial prayers and observances on its behalf. The characteristic points about Zoroastrian observances seem the use of some of the prophet's own words as *mąthras* at the time of disposing of the body, and the performance of ceremonies on the soul's behalf dedicated to Sraoša, the *yazata* of prayer, and a powerful protector against evil. In current usage[9] (which is probably that of the earliest times also) the body, being *nasā*, is removed as soon as possible, preferably on the same day; but this can be done only while the sun shines, so if death takes place late in the afternoon or at night the funeral must wait till the following day.[10] The corpse-bearers recite the opening part of the *Srōš Bāj*, which includes

[9] For details of Parsi funeral rites see Modi, *CC*, 49 ff.

[10] Instrnctions are given in the *Vd.* as to how the body should be kept when snow or heavy rain make it impossible to expose it at once, see *Vd.* 5.10-11, 8.4-9, and cf. *Šnš.* 2.9-10 (Tavadia, 35).

the *Kəm-nā Mazdā*, before they approach the body, making *paiwand* between themselves by holding the ends of a cord; and thereafter they maintain silence thoughout their work, until they have set the body down in the place of exposure (however far away this may be) and have withdrawn from there. They then "leave" the *bāj* by reciting its closing prayers, having thus kept themselves the whole time under the protection of Sraoša. The service recited by priests before the funeral procession sets out consists of the first and longest of the five *Gāthās*, namely *Gāthā Ahunavaitī* (*Y.* 28-34), recited in two parts, with a break after *Y.* 31.4, a verse significant for the soul's hope of salvation: "If Aša is to be invoked, and Mazdā (and the other) Ahuras, and Aši and Ārmaiti, (then) let me seek for myself, through best purpose (*vahišta- manah-*) the mighty power (*khšathra-*), by whose growth we may vanquish wickedness". There is evidently especial significance here in the word *khšathra*, with its double meaning of power and kingdom, and in particular the kingdom of heaven.

The break in the recitation of the *Gāthā* is made when the corpse-bearers lift the body from the stone slab or patch of gravel upon which it has been lying within *kaš*, and place it on the iron bier. The priests in their purity never approach nearer to it than three paces, and assuredly never touch it or enter the protective *kaš*. A procession of mourners follows the bier to the place of exposure; before it sets out all take the *bāj* of Srōš, each man for himself, and then they make *paiwand* in pairs, holding between them a cloth or cord, and thus proceed two by two, themselves protected against impurity and evil.[11] They halt at least 30 paces from the exposure-place, and wait for the corpse-bearers to return before saying a last prayer for the departed, and leaving the *bāj* of Srōš. All who have attended the funeral perform ablutions to cleanse themselves from death's evil before taking up their ordinary tasks again.

In later times the religious services performed during the three days grew very numerous, for those who could afford them.[12] Those which are regarded as essential (and which may therefore have been instituted fairly early in the history of the faith) are a *yasna* dedicated to Srōš, solemnised in each Hāvan Gāh, and an *āfrīnagān* or short service of blessing also dedicated to Srōš, and celebrated at the beginning of each Aiwisrūthrim

[11] This procession is known to the Parsis as *pāydast* (literally "foot-hand") which they explain as referring to the fact that the mourners always walk, and thus make *paiwand* by their hands with one another.

[12] For a list of them see Modi, *CC*, 409-10. Among the Parsis they are referred to collectively as the *Srōš* ceremonies. The optional ones include one to three *Vendidāds* solemnized at night, and a *drōn* service to Srōš in each of the five *gāhs* of each day. It is nsual to recite the *Farvardin Yašt* daily during the Aiwisrūthrim Gāh.

Gāh (the time protected by the *fravašis*). This service incorporates verses from the longer *Srōš Yašt*. Then three *āfrīnagāns* are solemnised during the fateful third night, dedicated firstly to Rašnu and Arštāt together, *yazatas* of the justice so soon to be meted out to the soul; then to Rāman, divinity of the mysterious air through which it must now travel;[13] and finally to the *fravašis* of the just (*ardāy fravaš*),[14] whose company it is about to join. There is another service just before dawn on the fourth morning.[15] The mourners pause as the sun appears to draw the soul up to face Mithra the Judge at the Činvat Bridge;[16] and then they solemnise a last service, make offering to fire on behalf of the soul, and break three days of abstinence by sharing together the flesh of the animal sacrifice.[17]

This sacrifice, and the clothes which are consecrated for the use of the soul during the *āfrīnagāns* of the third night,[18] the *sagdīd* or showing the corpse to a dog,[19] and the many ceremonies which take place throughout the first year for the soul's sake, and annually thereafter, were all evidently inheritances from Iran's pagan past; and it is difficult to imagine that Zoroaster, with his insistence on the responsibility of each individual for his own salvation, himself countenanced the practice of so many rites designed to help the departed. Such observances clearly meant much to the Iranians, however; and those which were rejected by the prophet were evidently revived again gradually, so that in time the Zoroastrian cult of the dead seems to have incorporated almost all the old elements, subordinated, however, sometimes uneasily, to Zoroaster's own stern doctrines about unswerving justice in the hereafter. Similar revivals of old pagan usages can be traced in various branches of the Christian and Muslim communities, despite the difficulties there also of reconciling them logically with strict orthodoxy.

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[13] See above, pp. 80-1.

[14] See above, p. 122 with n. 71.

[15] There is a divergence here in current usage between the Iranis and Parsis, see under the *uthamna* ceremony in Vol. IV.

[16] That it is Mithra (Mihr) to whom each man must answer is a doctrine deeply ingrained in popular consciousness, which is often referred to in matter-of-fact fashion by the orthodox of both living communities.

[17] Among the Parsis this sacrifice has been wholly abandoned since the early decades of the present century, and sandalwood is now offered by them instead.

[18] See above, p. 121.

[19] See above, p. 303. With the tendency to triplicate observances, the *sagdīd* was generally, it seems, performed thrice: the dog, that is, was brought to look at the corpse when it was shrouded, before it was carried away from the house, and again at the place of exposure. Among the Parsis it was also performed at the beginning of each new watch (*gāh*) as long as the body had to remain in the house (see Modi, *CC*, 58). On this custom in later times in both Iran and India see in more detail in Vol. IV.

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Select bibliography of books repeatedly cited

[Where the author's name or the title is much abbreviated in citation, the abbreviation follows the entry in brackets. Because there are different systems of transcribing Middle Persian, and ambiguities in the Pahlavi script, the titles of Zoroastrian works are sometimes cited in forms which differ slightly from those used by their editors, e.g. *Zādspram* instead of *Zatsparam*, *Ardāy Virāz* instead of *Ardā Virāf*.]

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[In the alphabetic order *ą* follows *a*, *ə* follows *e*, *č* follows *c*, *ŋ* follows *n*, *š* follows *s*, *ž* follows *z*. In arranging words no distinction has been made between long and short vowels. Pahlavi and later forms are generally given in square brackets after the Avestan ones, and are entered separately only when there is a significant difference between the two.]

Ābān see Āpas
Ābān Niyāyeš 52; 271-2.
Ābān Yašt 73.
abstract divinities 23-4; 58, 59; 203.
Aditi 55.
Ādityas 55; 83.
Ādurbād ī Mahraspandān 35; 288.
Aēšma demon of Wrath, 87; companion of the *daēvas*, 201; flees at the last day before the Saošyant, 283; the Arabs are of his seed, 288.
aēthrapati [ērbad, hērbad] 12.
Afrāsiyāb see Fraŋrasyan
āfrīnagān an "outer" religious ceremony, 168; legends connected with the offerings made at it, 281.
after-life pagan belief in it beneath the earth, 109-10, 112, 115; in Paradise, 110-12; Zoroastrian beliefs, 235-42, 328.
Agni identified with Apąm Napāt, 45-6; the nature of his primary concept, 69-70.
Ahriman see Angra Mainyu
Ahuna vairya [Ahunvar] 260-1.
ahura "lord" 23.
Ahura used alone for *Vouruna Apąm Napāt, q.v.
ahuradāta 49-50; 63.
Ahura Mazdā [Ohrmazd] the meaning of his name, and his identity with the Asura of the *RV*, 37-40; his position in the pagan pantheon, 48-9, 50, 52-3; for Zoroaster the one uncreated Being worthy of worship, 192 ff.; chose *aša*, 193; anthropomorphically conceived, 198; constantly invoked as the Creator, 197-8; hence the *gahāmbārs* all devoted to him, 260; the especial guardian of the creation of man, 204, 211; comprehends in his person all the qualities of the individual Amə̄ša Spəntas, 222-3; the *kustī* prayers addressed to him, 258; no blasphemy intended in *yašt* passages representing him reverencing lesser *yazatas*, 269-70.
ahurānī 51, 272.
Ahuras the three Lords of the Iranian pantheon, 23 ff. (Cf. Asuras)
Airya one of five Iranian (Aryan) tribes, to which the "Avestan" people belonged, 104; 250; the inhabitants of Airyanəm Vaēǰah, 144; their *khvarənah* protected by the Ahuras, 67-8; the term also used generally of the Iranian peoples, who are especially of the race of Gayō.marətan, 140; non-Airyas necessarily wicked, 63 n. 273.
Airyaman 56-7; his part at Frašō.kərəti, 57, 242, 291.
Airyanəm Vaēǰah [Ērānvēǰ] 144-5; 274-5.
Airyəmā išyō 56; 261; 263; 265.
Aiwisrūthra [Aiwisrūthrim] the 4th watch *(gāh)* of the 24-hour day, from sunset till midnight, 124; under the guardianship of the *fravašis*, 124, 259.
Aka Manah 283.
Akhtya 161.
*Āla demon of purpureal fever, 87 n. 20.
Amahraspand see Amə̄ša Spənta
Amestris 109; 112.
amərətāt ~ Ved. *amṛtatva-*, "long life" or "immortality" 115 n. 32.
Amərətāt [Amurdād] personification of "Long Life" and "Immortality", one of the 7 great Amə̄ša Spəntas (q.v.), 203; distributes essence of the first plant to all the earth, 138; guardian of plant creation, 204; her relationship to it, 205-6; her relationship to man, 221; the *yazatā* Earth is her *hamkār*, 267; her part at the miraculous conception of the prophet, 278; respect for her incumbent while eating, 309, 315.
amə̄ša adjective, 1) "life-giving" 30 n. 48; 2) "undying, immortal", one of the Indo-Iranian terms for a divine being, 23, 197.
Amə̄ša Spənta [Amahraspand, Amešaspand] "Bounteous Immortal", general Zoroastrian term for beneficent divine beings, 197; first encountered in *YHapt.*, 264; often used specifically of the 7 great divinities of Zoroaster's revelation, 194; these are independent beings, not merely aspects of Ahura Mazdā, 202-3, 212-3; their names, 203; guardians of the 7 creations, 204, 205 ff., 213-4; this link the basis of much of Zoroastrian ethic and observance, 208-9, 220-2, 228, 296 ff.; concepts of the 7 embody both ancient and new elements, 212; invoked together with what they personify, 213; represented physically in the cult, 219-20; confessional texts begin with acknowledgement of sins against them and the 7 creations, 321.
Amśa 58.
Amurdād see Amərətāt
anaghra raočā the "endless light" of Paradise, abode of Ahura Mazdā, 141; 278.
Anaghra Raočā [Anērān] *yazata* of the "Endless Light", *hamkār* of Khšathra, 267.
Anāhīd see Arədvī Sūrā Anāhitā
andom 163-4.
Angra Mainyu [YAv. Aŋra Mainyu, Pahl. Ahriman] "Hostile Spirit", the uncreated opponent of Ahura Mazdā, 192; lacks a physical being, 199; created the *daēvas* and "not-life", 201; his assault on the creations, 139, 232, 286; his fate at Frašō.kərəti, 243-4, 245-6, 283; probably unknown before Zoroaster's revelation, 199, 255.
Animals fifth of the 7 creations (q.v.), 138-9; ancient classifications of them, 146; all *spənta* animals come from the Gav aēvō.dāta (q.v.), 139, 150; they have souls *(urvan)*, 117, 149-50; are under the protection of Vohu Manah (q.v.), hence care for them incumbent on man, 297-8. (For *daēvic* animals see *khrafstra*.)
anthropomorphism 31; 87; 198.
Apaoša 74.
Āpas [Ābān] the personified Waters, 71; 74; 160.
Apąm Napāt see *Vouruna Apąm Napāt.
Āptya 152-3.
Arachosia 71.
Arang see Raŋha
Ardašīr the Kay 288.
Ardašīr Pāpakān 68; 288.
Ardāy Fravaš, Ardāy Fravahr 122 n. 71. (See further under fravaši.)
Ardāy Vīrāz Nāmag a part of Iranian mantic literature, 280 n. 14.
Ardvahišt see Aša Vahišta
Arədvī Sūrā Anāhitā [Ardvīsūr] probably ~ Indo-Iranian Sarasvatī, personification of the mythical river that gives water to the world, 71-4; was later identified with the alien Anaītis and came to overshadow *Vouruna, 52; receiving sacrifices, 41; rescued Pāurva, 100; answered the prayer of Kərəsāspa, 102; boons granted by her, 107, 151-2; restrictions on partaking of her *zaothras*, 166; these not to be offered at night, 170; the cow-sacrifice especially hers, 173; feast of the Waters now dedicated to her, 176; *hamkār* of Ārmaiti, 267; the *Ābān Niyāyeš* consists almost wholly of verses from her hymn, 272; guards the seed of Zoroaster beneath Lake Kąsaoya, 285.
Arəǰat.aspa [Arǰāsp] 188; 249.
Arəzahi [Arzah] 134; 135; 284.
Ārmaiti [Spendārmad] personification of "Devotion" or "Obedience", one of the 7 great Amə̄ša Spəntas (q.v.), 203; guardian of the creation of earth, 204, 256; her relationship to it, 206-7; guardian also of women, 207 n. 66; her *hamkārs*, 267; her feast-day especially that of farmers, 206; *khrafstras* killed in celebration of it, 299; ritual purification undergone by women before it, 313; earth (q.v.) to be cherished in her honour, 300-1, 315; her name used as a synonym for earth, 206, 328.
Arštāt [Aštād] personification of "Justice", companion of Mithra, 59, 203; aids Pəšōtanu, 290; an *āfrīnagān* dedicated jointly to her and Rašnu on the 3rd night after death, 330.
Aryaman 55-6. (Cf. Airyaman.)
ash from wood fires in purification rites, 312 with n. 101, 323.
asmān see sky
Asmān *yazata* of the Sky, 78; *hamkār* of Khšathra, 267.
Ass with 3 legs 89.
Assara Mazaš 14 n. 52.
Assyrians 16-7.
astōdān 327.
Astō.vīdhātu 87.
Astvat.ərəta proper name of the Saošyant (q.v.), 282, 283, 293.
asura 23.
Asura, the in the Rigveda, 37-40, 48.
asuras the three Lords of the Indo-Iranian pantheon, 4-5, 23, 48; the moral dignity of their concept, and its reflection of a social pattern, 52-3; rulers of Paradise, 187.
aša in the pagan religion, 5, 27-8, 199; chosen in the beginning by Ahura Mazdā, 193; its dominant role maintained in Zoroastrianism, 212.
Aša Vahišta [Ardvahišt] one of the 7 great Amə̄ša Spəntas (q.v.), 203; followed by the righteous (see *ašavan*), 193; personification of *aša*, and opponent of the Drug, 199-200, 242; guardian of the creation of fire, 204; his relationship to it, 211-2, 218; the most frequently invoked by Zoroaster of all the Amə̄ša Spəntas, 212; protects the watch of Rapithwā (q.v.), 259; his *hamkārs*, 267; his part at the miraculous conception of the prophet, 277-8; at the conversion of Vīštāspa, 280.
ašavan [ardāw, ardāy] one who adheres to *aša*, righteous, 28; the *ašavan* attain Paradise, 27 n. 31, 117; the purest of beings, 301.
Ašəm vohū 262, 265.
aši "thing attained, reward, recompense" 65, 225-6.
Aši [Ard] the pagan goddess personifying *aši*, 65-6; in *YHapt.*, 58, 59; verses in

her honour later devoted to Arədvī Sūrā, 72-3; *Druvāspā* perhaps one of her epithets, 82; her *zaothras* forbidden to the sterile, 166; in the *Gāthās*, 195, 225-6, 227.
ašōdād 169-70 with n. 151; 227.
Ašō.zušta 90.
Aštād see Arštāt
ātar see fire
Ātar *yazata* of fire, 70-1; angered by Kərəsāspa, 103; invoked in *YHapt.*, 160; *hamkār* of Aša, 267.
Ātaš Niyāyeš 154-5; 272-3.
āthravan, athaurvan 6; 250.
Āthwya 97-8.
atonement for sin 318-9; 321.
Avesta its value for the reconstruction of Indo-Iranian beliefs, 17-8, 20; regarded as entirely revealed to Zoroaster by Ahura Mazdā, 130 with n. 3; belongs almost wholly to eastern Iran, 190-1, 276; no part of it can be certainly dated, 20 with n. 76, 265-6.
Avestan language 189.
Avestan people 17. (See also Airya.)
Ayāthrima 174; 176; 259.
Azarbaijan 276.
āzūiti "fat", used of the *zaothra* to fire, 154 n. 40; 210 n. 79; 214; 216 n. 96.
Āzūiti *yazatā* of Fatness or Plenty, 58.
Aži Dahāka the most formidable of Iranian dragons, 91; sought to seize Khvarənah, 67; overcome by Thraētaona, 98, 100; according to one tradition lives fettered, to be slain at the Last Day by Kərəsāspa, 100, 103; according to another, probably older one, slain by Thraētaona, 283; in the developed world-history said to rule for 1000 years after Yima, 289, 292; will break his bonds at the end of the 11th millennium, 290.
Babylonian (Mespotamian) influences 95; 134 nn. 29, 34; 276 n. 107; 285-6; 288; 291-2; 293.
Bactria 275-6.
baga general pagan term for divinity, 23, 58; its use in Zoroastrianism, 196 with n. 24.
Baga pagan Iranian god, 57-8.
*Bagakāna 58.
Bahman see Vohu Manah
Bahrām see Vərəthraghna
Bahrām Yašt 62 n. 267.
baoidhi [bōy] 1. "odour" of the sacrifice, held to be the portion enjoyed by the divine beings, 162, 163; 2. "incense", one of the three offerings made to fire, 154; and used generally as helping to repel evil and delight the *yazatas*, 124 n. 79; 304.
barašnom "ritual ablution", 312.
barašnom I ňō-šaba [nō-šwa, nāhn] the greatest of the cleansing rites, 313-8; essential for priests, 317, 323; sometimes taken repeatedly by elderly women, 308; possibility of undergoing it by proxy, 317-8, 319; late analogy between the 9 nights' retreat and Zoroaster's imprisonment, 281; the *rimani barašnom*, 318 with n. 132.
barəsman [barsom] name of both strew of herbage and bundle of consecrated twigs, 167.
Bastavairi 188.
Bee 299 n. 28.
Bāndva 186.
Bhaga 57.
Blood made part of the offerings to evil powers, 171; any flow of it impure, 307; restrictions on women during menstruation, 307-8.
Boar 63 with n. 276; 83 n. 416.
Bounteous Immortals see Aməša Spənta
bōy see baoidhi
*Brādrēs 191; 290 n. 64.
Breath source of pollution, 309; 322 with n. 151.
Bṛhaspati 61-2.
būdyōzadīh 150.
Būiti 87.
Bull, Uniquely-created see *Gav aēvō.dāta*
bull-sacrifice 139; 141; 150; 173; 244.
Bundahišn chief source for the ancient cosmology, 130.
Burial characteristic funerary rite of the Indo-Iranians and pagan Iranians, 109-110, 113, 114; associated with belief in subterranean after-life, 112; in Zoroastrian times regarded as a means of consigning the soul to hell, 328.
Burj Yazad, Burz Yazad see *Vouruna Apąm Napāt
Būšyąstā 29; 87.
Calendar of 360 days, 171-2; the "Zoroastrian" calendar probably evolved in the late Achaemenian period, 75.
Cat regarded as a *khrafstra*, 91.
Central Asia its pre-Iranian culture, 15-6; geographically suitable for rite of exposure, 113.
Chariot 6.
Cheerfulness a virtue, 279; 315.
Child-birth 308.
Children not fully responsible for their actions, 237 n. 35.
Cleanliness a duty for Zoroastrians, 308; a part of godliness, 316; ablutions obligatory before prayer and acts of worship, 310; non-Zoroastrians necessarily unclean, 310; Zoroastrians if unclean may not pray, 310.
Conversion to Zoroastrianism its dangers

and difficulties in the early days, 186; 250-1; 253; 257.
Cord, sacred see *kusti*
Cosmogony 131 ff.
Cow in the religious symbolism, 13-4; 166; 209-11; 253; 254; 264.
Creation pagan concepts as to its nature, 131-2; Ahura Mazdā's creation of the *yazatas*, 194-5; the purpose of his creation as a whole, 195; first *mēnōg*, then *gētīg*, 230-1.
Creations ancient Iranian concept of 7 "creations" or divisions of the physical world, 131 ff.; undoubtedly pre-Zoroastrian, 131, 146; referred to in *YHapt.* and *Farvardīn Yašt*, 142; and throughout Zoroastrian scripture and exegesis, 260 with n. 39; the 7 creations assigned by Zoroaster individually to the care of the 7 Aməša Spəntas, 203-4; cherishing them part of the struggle against Angra Mainyu, 204; later attempts to harmonise doctrine with Greek theories about the elements, 205; relationship between the 7 Aməša Spəntas and the 7 creations, 205 ff.; the creations represented in the cult, 219-20; and celebrated annually at the *gahāmbārs* and Nō Rōz, 223-4; assailed by Angra Mainyu, 232; doctrine provides basis for many of the purity laws, 294, 296 ff.; Zoroastrian confessionals begin with sins against the creations, 321; Yima's false claim to be the creator of them all, 93 n. 56.
Creator constant epithet of Ahura Mazdā, 195-6.
Cremation 110 with n. 11; 112-3.
Cyrus 122.
Čagād ī dāidīg see Harā
Čamrūš 43; 90.
Čihrdād Nask 181.
Činvatō Pərətu [Činvat Puhl] 117; 137; 237.
Čistā 62.
Čisti 62.
daēnā [dēn] 1. "conscience" 237-40; 2. "religion", ibid.
Daēnā [Dēn] 1. the Maiden at the Činvatō Pərətu (as the personification of conscience?), 237-40; 2. the *yazatā* personifying Religion, 62; 237-40.
daēva [dēv, Skt. deva] "shining one", ancient name for certain of the Indo-Iranian gods, 23; the three wicked *daēvas* who are named in Zoroastrianism, 53, 54-5, 83, 84, 201; the Indian *devas* worshipped by the same rites as the *asuras*, 83; gradually in Zoroastrianism the word degenerating to stand for demon, 85, 86, 87 n. 14, 107; the *daēvas* seek to intercept offerings made to the *yazatas*, 170; propitiatory offerings made to them by the wicked, 171; regarded by Zoroaster as destructive of the creation of Ahura Mazdā, 197; allied to Wrath, 201; wicked either through choice or as the seed of Angra Mainyu, 201; their rejection probably a stumbling-block for converts, 251-2; their worship persisting, 252; had perhaps grown prominent during the period of migrations, 252.
daēvic vocabulary 298.
Daēvō.tbiš 273 n. 91.
Dāhi one of 5 Iranian tribes, 104; 250.
Dāityā see Vaŋhvī Dāityā
dakhma original meaning "grave", 109, 308, 326; later "place of exposure", 326-7.
Dakṣa 58.
dāmi 82 n. 410.
Dāmōiš Upamana 83 n. 416.
Dānu 107.
Death pagan rites at death, 120-5; largely maintained in Zoroastrianism, 330; death brought by Angra Mainyu, 231; hence meritorious to inflict it on his creatures, 298; the greatest source of pollution, 300 ff.
dēv, deva see daēva
dog useful to the Indo-Iranian herdsman, 6; the four-eyed dogs who attend the dead, 116; food given ritually to a dog reaches a departed soul, 120, 163, 303; and also the divine beings, 163; honoured as the creature nearest in dignity to man, 302-3; its gaze is purifying, 303, 314. (See also *sagdīd*.)
dragons those named in Iranian legend, 91; their place in Iranian heroic tradition, 103-4; dragon-killing not connected with Nō Rōz, 102 n. 110, 172 n. 169.
Drangiana [Av. *Zranka] old name for Sakastān, Seistān (q.v.), 275; 293.
drug an evil principle opposed to *aša*, 87, 200-1; chosen in the beginning by Angra Mainyu, 193.
Drug the personification of *drug*, 200, 242, 254, 269, 283; the term used also for lesser powers of evil, 87 with n. 14, 279 n. 11.
drəgvant one who adheres to *drug*, a wicked person, 200, 237, 243.
druh 87.
drukhš 87 n. 14.
Druvāspā 82; 161 with n. 88.
dualism fostered in Iran by the physical conditions, 18-9; theistic dualism of the Indo-Iranians, 84; Zoroaster's dualism, 192-3, 198, 199, 218, 229-30; the dualism of two opposing Spirits will end with Frašō.kərəti, 233; dualism in the *Fra-*

varāne, 255.
Dughdōvā [Dughdōv] mother of the prophet, 182; meaning of her name, 183 n. 12; herself born with the *khvarənah* of Zoroaster, 277.
dūraoša 162 with n. 102; 217.
Dužyāiryā 74; 86.
dvandva compounds 32-3; 49; 55; 195 n. 15; 225; 272 with n. 87.
Dyaus 23.
earth third of the 7 creations (q.v.), 133 ff.; under the guardianship of Ārmaiti (q.v.), 206-7; care for it meritorious, 296, 300-1, 315. (See also Zam.)
Enoch, Book of 216 n. 97; 230; 243.
ērbad see aēthrapati
Erēč [Eraj] 104-5.
estates the 3 theoretical divisions of Iranian society, 5-7; 94; 281.
ethic of good thoughts, words and deeds, 241; 254; 256; 258; 319.
exposure rite perhaps developed in Central Asia in association with hope of salvation, 113-4; its essential feature is that the sun's rays shine on the corpse, 113-4, 325, 328; the ways in which it accords with Zoroaster's teachings, 325; no evidence for artificially-constructed places of exposure in ancient times, 327-8. (See also *dakhma*.)
Ǝrədat.fədhrī 285.
Ǝrəkhša 75.
fabulous creatures 88-92.
farrah see khvarənah
Farvardīn 119 n. 56.
Farvardīn Yašt partly very ancient, 119; its Zoroastrian revision, 268-9; its muster of the names of early believers, 273; recited daily during the three days after death, 329 n. 12.
Fathers see Pitaras
feast days in pagan times, 172 ff.; the same essential rituals probably solemnised at all, 176. (See further under *gahāmbārs*, Mihragān, Nō Rōz, Sada, Tīragān.)
fire associated with *aša* and Mithra through the ordeal, 28-9, 35-6; the sun represents it on high, 28-9 with n. 41, 212; the 7th of the creations (q.v.), pervading the other six, 140-1, 142; under the guardianship of Aša (q.v.), 204; seed of animals and men is from it, 140; its cult originally that of the hearth fire, 154-5; no evidence for a cult of temple fires before the historic period, 167; threefold offerings to fire, 154-5; *zaothra* to fire made at every *yasna*, 156; fire in the *Gāthās*, 212; Zoroastrian prayers said before fire as the representative of *aša*, 219, 258; the part of fire at the Last Day, 242; care for it according to the laws of purity, 297, 322 n. 151. (See also Ātar.)
Fradadh.afšu [Fradadafš] 134; 135; 284.
Frāhīm.rvāną.zōiš 277.
Frākhvkard see Vourukaša
framāyišn 10.
Fraŋrasyan [Afrāsiyāb] warrior-prince of the Tūiryas, and foe of Kavi Usan, 105-7; slew the wicked Zainigu, 106, 283; seeking the royal Khvarənah in vain, 67; for a time possessed it, 106; in the later tradition transformed into a *daēvic* figure, 106-7, 283.
Frasasti 58.
Frašaostra 188.
Frašō.kərəti [Frašegird] 232 with n. 17; 242; 244-6; 291; 292.
Fravarānē 253-6.
Fravardīgān 122-4; 125. (See further under Hamaspathmaēdaya.)
fravaši [fravard, fravahr, frōhr] the pagan concept, 117-20; in Zoroastrian usage only the *fravašis* of the *ašavan* invoked, 119-20; the hours of darkness belong to them, 124, 259; benign if worshipped, 124-5; care for survival of the family, 126; reverenced as are the gods, 126; doctrine of their pre-existence, 127-8; anomalies in their concept, 129; invoked at every Zoroastrian act of worship, 129; care for the 7 creations, 142; *hamkārs* of Haurvatāt, 267; an *āfrīnagān* dedicated to them on the 3rd night after death, 330. (Cf. Ardāy Fravaš.)
Frēdōn, Farēdōn see Thraētaona
frog the worst of *daēvic* creatures, 91, 301; seeks to destroy the Tree of All Seeds, 89.
Fryāna a Tūirya at the court of Vīštāspa, converted to Zoroastrianism, 107.
Fryāna family his descendants, 107-8; no justification for the hypothesis of a Fryāna tribe, religion or dialect, 107 n. 141.
funeral rites in pagan times, 120-2; in Zoroastrianism, 328-30.
gāh [Av. asnya- ratu-] one of the 5 watches of the Zoroastrian day, 258-9.
gahāmbārs [Av. yāirya- ratavō] 6 feasts of pagan times, 173-4; refounded by Zoroaster as holy days to celebrate the creations (q.v.), 175 n. 187, 223-4; their importance in the religious life of his community, 259-60, 305.
Gandarəwa 91; 102.
Gandharva 91 n. 43.
Gaokərəna [Gōkarn, Gōkart] 138. (See also White Hōm, under haoma.)
Garšāsp see Kərəsāspa

Garšāsp Nāma 102.
Gāthās belong to the category of *zaotar* poetry, 9; probably deliberately esoteric, 9, 20, 223; need therefore to be interpreted through the tradition, 20, 233; their present arrangement according to metre, 181; appear closely linked with the *yasna*, 228; their place in its liturgy, 265-6; the names of the 5 groups, 265.
Gav aēvō.dāta [gāv ī ēv-dād] "Uniquely-created Bull", the first living creature, 138-9; represents the 5th creation, that of animals (q.v.), all of which come from his seed, 139; seed purified in the moon, 139; in the pagan myth probably sacrificed by the gods, 139; in the Zoroastrian version slain by Angra Mainyu, 231; his death the prototype of animal sacrifice, 141; paralleled in the later tradition by the last sacrifice, that of the bull Hadhayans (q.v.), 244.
Gayō.marətan [Gayōmard] mythical First Man, 97; name means "Mortal Life", 80; round, like Vedic Mārtāṇḍa, 139; represents the 6th creation, that of mankind (q.v.), all of whom come from his seed, 140; seed purified by the sun, 140; no link between him and later microcosmic-macrocosmic speculations, 140 n. 79; in the pagan myth probably sacrificed by the gods, this being the prototype of human sacrifice, 141; in the Zoroastrian version slain by Angra Mainyu, 231; made one of the Pīšdādian "dynasty", 104; his body will be the first to be resurrected, 291; no reason to identify him with the Saošyant, 284 n. 27.
gētīg 229 ff.; 235-6; 245; 286-7; *gētīg* forms not possessed by the *daēvic* creation, 232, 269; this *gētīg* world to be enjoyed, 233-4.
geti-kharīd 115 n. 34.
Gəuš Tašan 81-2; 161; in the *Gāthās*, 195; 227.
Gəuš Urvan a divinity whose concept arises from the cult, 81; also called, exceptionally, Gəuš Fravaši, 119; absorbs the souls of animals who die a consecrated death, 117, 150; others do not reach him, 171; later identified as the soul of the Uniquely-created Bull, 150; in the *Gāthās*, 195, 227; *hamkār* of Vohu Manah, 267; intercedes for Kərəsāspa, 103.
ghosel 312.
gōmēz 296; 312; 313; 314.
Gōpatšāh 88 n. 23.
gōspand [Av. gav- spanta-] generic term for beneficial animals, 302 n. 43; their flesh not *nasā*, 302.
Gōš Yašt 82.
Grōhma 186.
Gudha 100-1.
gumēzišn 231; 286.
Hadhayans 89-90; 244. (Also called Srīsōk.)
Hadiš 82-3.
Haēčat.aspa 182.
hair polluting when cut or shed, 308-9, 322 with n. 150.
Hamaspathmaēdaya pagan festival of the *fravašis*, celebrated on the last night of the year, 122-4, 174; refounded by Zoroaster as one of the *gahāmbārs* (q.v.), 223; extended in Sasanian times to a 10-day feast known as Fravardīgān, 122-3.
hamidhpati 12.
hamkār 267.
Hāmun Lake see Kąsaoya
haoma [hōm] a plant pressed for its exhilarating juice, 157; its ritual offering has its prototype in the sacrifice of the first plant (q.v.), 138, 141; its identity and rites, 156-60; link with the blood sacrifice, 160; unsoundness of comparison with Christian communion rite, 164-5; legends of the first men to press it, 97; drunk to give battle-frenzy, 106, 158; and for inspiration, 158; the offering remains central to the Zoroastrian *yasna*, 216-8; the present *yasna* embodies 2 separate *haoma* offerings, 159-60, 265; the *fravaši* of the prophet set in a stalk of *haoma*, 278; the White Haoma (see also Gaokərəna) confers immortality of the body, 138, 244.
Haoma [Hōm] *yazata* of the plant *haoma*, 81, 158-9, 160-2; offerings to him as divine priest of the sacrifice, 160-1, 163; prayed to by women for illustrious sons, 97; giving help to Kavi Haosravah, 106; his link with Mithra, 160-1 with n. 88, 173.
haomayō gava 269 n. 82.
Haosravah see Kavi Haosravah
Haošyaŋha [Hōšang] 104.
haparəsī 171.
Haptōiringa [Haftōiring] 76; 78.
Harā [Harburz, Alburz] 43, 73, 74; the first and greatest of mountains, 133; its peak, Taēra [Tērag] is at earth's centre, 134; intercepts light of the sun, 135; water for the world descends from it, 136; this peak also called Hukairya [Hukar] and Čagād ī dāidīg, 137; name Alburz given to actual range of mountains, 144.
*Harahvatī probably the proper name of Arədvī Sūrā Anāhitā (q.v.), 71-2.
Haurvatāt [Hordād] personification of "Wholeness" or "Health", one of the 7

great Aməša Spəntas (q.v.), 203; guardian of the creation of water, 204; her relationship to it, 205-6; her *hamkārs*, 267; her part at the miraculous conception of the prophet, 278; respect for her incumbent while drinking, 309, 315.
Hāvani [Hāvan] the first watch *(gāh)* of the day, 258; under the guardianship of Mithra, 41, 258; the *yasna* may only be performed then, 170; in winter Rapithwā becomes Second Hāvani, 259.
Hąm.varəti 59; 203.
hell no good evidence for such a concept in early Iranian or Indian belief, 115; in Zoroastrianism, 199; held to be in the north, 78.
Hellenistic influences 276 n. 107; 288; 293.
hērbad see aēthrapati
hikhra [hikhr] 306 with n. 71; 327.
hindu 136.
hōm see haoma
Hōm Yašt 158; 159; 265.
Hordād see Haurvatāt
horse its use for driving and riding, 6; as symbol of water-divinities, 45 n. 151, 74; miraculous cure of Vīštāspa's horse, 280.
horse-sacrifice 111, 122; 151; 173.
"House of Song" [Garōdmān] 152; 198; 270.
Hukairya see under Harā
human sacrifice 109-10; 112; 141 with n. 87.
Hutaosā [Hutōs] 187; 274.
Hvar Khšaēta [Khoršēd] *yazata* of the sun, 69; his need for worship, 239; *hamkār* of Khšathra, 267.
Hvarə.čithra 188; 281.
Hvōgva 188.
Hvōvī 188; 273; 285.
Indo-Iranians 3 ff.; 14-6.
Indra [Indar] in the Mitanni tablets, 14; held to embody the ideal of the Indo-Iranian warrior, 53; the contrast between him and the Asuras, 53-4, 83; usurping the role of the Indo-Iranian Vṛtraghna, 54, 64-5; in Zoroastrianism, as *daēva*, a wicked being, 83, 201.
infants disposal of their bodies, 316 n. 124.
Isat.vāstra [Isadvāstar] eldest son of the prophet, 188; regarded as head of the priestly estate, 281; said to be the ancestor of the virgin mothers of the first two Saošyants, 285; will preside over the assembly of the blessed at Frašō.kərəti, 291.
Isfandiyār see Spəntōdhāta
Iš 58.
Ižā essence of the sacrifice, 152, 164.
Ižā *yazatā* personifying the sacrifice, 164; in the *Gāthās*, 195, 227-8.
Jam, Jamšēd see Yima
Jāmāspa [Jāmāsp] 188; 281.
Jambū tree 138; 143.
Jambūdvīpa 134.
juddīn 306.
judgment of the individual soul, 236-41; the Last Judgment, 242-4, 246.
Kamak 91; 102.
Kamrōd 145.
Kara [Kar] 89.
karapan [karab] pagan priest, 12; 186; 191; 280.
Karšiptar 90.
karšvar [kešvar] 134; 284.
kaš 166; 304; 312; 314.
kathenotheism 270.
kavi [kav, kay, kayag] inspired seer, 11-12; as a group hostile to the prophet, 11, 186, 280; eight of the house of Vīštāspa bore the title, 11, 105.
Kavi Haosravah [Kay Khosrau] 105; 106; 291.
Kavi Usan [Kay Us, Kay Kayus] 105; 106; 107.
Kavyān [Kayānian] dynasty 67; 105; came to be linked with Lake Kąsaoya, 274.
Kąsaoya Lake [Kayānsih] 145; 274; 282; 283; 285.
kešvar see karšvar
Kām-nā Mazdā 273 with n. 90; 303.
Kərəsāspa [Karšāsp, Garšāsp] hero of the house of Sāma, 97, 99-103; his association with Seistan a late development, 101-2; his sin against fire, 102-3 with n. 115; other sins, 103; according to one legend will slay Aži Dahāka (q.v.) at the last day, 103, 291.
Kərəsavazda 106.
Khnąthaitī 86; 103.
Khoršēd see Hvar Khšaēta
Khoršēd Niyāyeš 69; 76; 271; 272.
Khosrau the Kay see Kavi Haosravah
Khosrau son of Kavād 288.
khrafstra [khrafstar] general term for harmful and repulsive creatures, 90-1 with n. 38; to slay them meritorious, 298-300. (See also bee, eat, lion, silkworm.)
khšaēta 1. "prince, king" 2. "radiant" 69 with n. 311; 92.
khšathra "dominion, power, kingdom", 198; 209; 221; 241; 329. (See also "Kingdom of God".)
Khšathra Vairya [Shahrevar] personification of *khšathra*, one of the 7 great Aməša Spəntas (q.v.), 203, 209; guardian of the sky (q.v.) and hence of metals, 204; his relationship to them, 207-9; his part at Frašō.kərəti, 242 n. 59, 244; his *hamkārs* all divinities connected with the sky, 267.
khšnūman 75.
khvaētvadatha 254 with n. 24; 285.
Khvaniratha 134; 284.
khvarənah [khwarr(ah), farnah] god-given "fortune" or "grace", 151; watched over by Mithra and *Vouruna Apąm Napāt, 42-3; left Yima when he lied, 93; accompanied all the *kavis* of Vīštāspa's house, 105; for a time possessed by Franrasyan, 106; accompanied Zoroaster, 277; and will be with the Saošyant, 282.
Khvarənah [khwarr(ah), farnah] *yazata* personifying *khvarənah*, 66-8; associated with the Ahuras, 67; will aid Pəšōtanu, 290.
Khwarezmia 4; 17; 275.
Kingdom of God to come on earth, 209; 236; 241; 246; 264. (See also *khšathra*.)
Kūh-i Mihr 30 n. 55.
Kušan coins their iconography unreliable in details, 68; representations of individual *yazatas*, 65, 68, 75, 82.
knstī [Av. yāh, aiwiyāŋhana] sacred cord put on at 15 years of age, 13, 257; in Zoroastrianism worn by men and women, 257; its symbolism, 258.
laity their part in religious observances, 154-6; 168-9; 176-7.
lard 297.
lion 299.
mada, YAv. madha 216-7; 255.
maga the gospel of Zoroaster, 250.
magavan 251.
magha the 9 holes of the ancient *barašnom* rite, 314.
Magi 10-11; 276.
Māhohrmizd 49.
Maiden at the Činvatō Pərətu see Daēnā
Maidhyāirya 174.
Maidhyōimāŋha, YAv. Maidhyōimāh [Mēdyōmāh] 186 with n. 24; 273.
Maidhyōi.šəma 174.
Maidhyōi.zarəmāya 174; 175; 184-5.
Malkūs 290.
Man sixth of the 7 creations (q.v.), 140; under the guardianship of Ahnra Mazdā, 211; sprung from the seed of Gayō.marətan (q.v.), 140; steward of the other 6 creations, 221-2, 294, 297, 305-6; duty to make himself a dwelling-place for all the 7 great Aməša Spəntas, 221; represented at the *yasna* by the celebrating priest, 220.
mang 231 n. 11; 280 n. 14.
manticism 9; 11; 12; 73; 184 with n. 17; 280 n. 14.
Manu 96.
Manuščithra [Manuščihr, Persian Manūčihr] 96; 104.
Mārtāṇḍa 139-40.
Mašya 96-7; 140.
Mašyānag 96-7.
māyā 32; 33; 51.
Mazdā see Ahura Mazdā
mazdadāta 50-1.
mąthra 8; 25; 165.
mąthran 8; 263 n. 52.
Medes 10, 19.
Media 16-17.
Meherji Rana 122.
mēnōg 89; 128; 229 ff.; 235-6; 245; 286; 294.
Mēru, Sumēru 134.
Mesopotamian see Babylonian influences
metals held to include rock-crystal, which is the substance of the sky, 132-3; hence under the guardianship of Khšathra (q.v.), 204, 207-8; care for metals therefore meritorious, 296; in one passage metals said to come from the body of Gayō.marətan, 140 n. 81.
Mihrdāt 49.
Mihr Niyāyeš 69; 271; 272.
Mihrohrmazd 49.
Mihr Yašt 24; 59.
missionary endeavour by early Zoroastrians, 250; 252.
Misvan Gātu [Gyāg ī Hammistagān] 237; 244.
Mitanni treaty 14; 54; 64.
Mithra [Mihr] 22; 24-31; 34-6; one of the three Ahuras (q.v.), 48-9, 52; in late usage could be identified with the sun, 69; the lesser *yazatas* who are associated with him, 59-63; fights against *pairikās*, 86; his boons to worshippers, 47-8, 245; his invocation to the sacrifice, 152; stipulations about partaking of his *zaothras*, 166; the blood sacrifice to him at his festival, 172-3; in general, 173; linked through it with Haoma, 160 with n. 88, 173; associated, as lord of fire and the sun, with Sada, 176; invoked by Zoroaster under the phrase "the other Ahuras", 195; 225; presides at the judgment of the individual soul, 240-1, 330 with n. 16; *hamkār* of Khšathra, as *Vouruna is of Ārmaiti, 267; in Zoroastrianism his link with the sun stressed, rather than that with fire, 267; watches over the pact between Ohrmazd and Ahriman, 286; will aid Pəšōtanu, 290. His identification by some Western scholars with Yima due to misreadings of Pahlavi, 93 n. 54, 96 n. 75.
Mithraism 24 n. 9.
Mithrakāna [Mihragān] 172-3.
mithrō.drūj 27; cf. *mihr-drūjīh*, 35.

Mitra 14; 24 ff.
monotheism the character of Zoroastrian monotheism, 195-6; 225; its foreshadowing in the pagan faith, 22-3.
moon 139; 271. (See also Māh.)
mortar for pounding *haoma*, 157 n. 58; 160; 168; at Persepolis, 159.
mountains 146. (See also Harā.)
Mūš 86.
Muža 250 with n. 8.
myazda [myazd] 148-9.
nāhn 312; 313.
nail-parings 90; 308-9.
Nairyō.saṇha [Nēryōsang] 60-1; guards the seed of Gayō.marətan, 140; and of Zoroaster, 285; protects the prophet's unborn *fravaši*, 94, 277; will aid Pəšōtanu, 290.
naire.manah [narīmān] epithet of Kərəsāspa, 101-2.
Naotaras 65.
Nāṇhaithya 54-5; 83.
nasā "putrifying matter", 300 ff.; what is dessicated is not *nasā*, 301; flesh of *gōspand* not *nasā*, 302; a still-born child *nasā* for the mother, 308.
nasā-sālār 304-5.
Nāsatya 14 with n. 54; 54-5 with n. 209.
Nasuš demon of the corpse and decay, 86; called a *drug*, 87; conceived as a fly, 86; settles instantly on the body at death, 300; driven back by the *Kəm-nā Mazdā*, 303.
nature gods 68 ff.; 225.
night the time of evil spirits, 86; 90; 124-5 with n. 83; under the guardianship of the *fravašis*, 124, 259; Zoroaster's attribution of its creation to Ahura Mazdā probably the use of a traditional expression, 196 n. 23.
night-soil 309.
nīrang 311-12; its use in purification rites, 312, 313, 314; origin of the term, 323; efficacy of *nīrang*, 324.
nīrangdīn 323.
niyāyeš 271.
Nō Rōz the pagan New Year feast, 172; refounded by Zoroaster as the feast of the creation of fire, foreshadowing Frašō.kərəti, 175, 224, 245; the significance of its name, 175 with n. 186.
north the direction of hell, 78, 86.
"not-life" [Av. *ajyāti*] an expression perhaps coined by Zoroaster for the evil creation, 199, 201.
offerings their nature, 240; largely shared among worshippers, priests and the poor, 257-8; propitiatory offerings made by the wicked at night, 267-8. (See also sacrifice.)
Ohrmazd see Ahura Mazdā
Ohrmazddāt 49.
oral tradition 5 n. 11; 19-20; 73; 271; 292.
ordeals by water, 34-5; by fire, 35-6; the last ordeal, 242-3.
ossuaries 327.
"outer" rituals 168.
pādyāb [pājō] 296; 323.
pādyāb-kustī 310.
pairikā 85-6; 101; 102; 279 n. 11.
paitidāna [padān] 322-3.
Paitišhahya 174.
paiwand "contact", made between 2 or more persons for ritual purposes, 314; avoided by the very pure and very impure, 305, 311, 315; made between the pure for increased strength against evil, 329.
Panth Yazad 62 n. 267.
paraḍhāta epithet of Haošyaṇha, 104; used to provide a name for the legendary "Pīšdādian" dynasty, 104.
Paradise the pagan concept and its evolution, 110-11; hope of it probably restricted to nobles and priests, 112; how to be attained according to pagan doctrine, 114-5; according to Zoroaster, 237-42; according to his teachings might be reached by all, 251.
parahaoma 158; 159-60.
Pārəndi 58; 59.
patīt 319-21.
Pāurva 100; 106.
pāvi 166-7; 322.
pāw-mahal 322.
pāw-mahal services 323.
Pəšōtanu [Pešōtan] 281; 289-90.
Pišdādian see under paraḍhāta
Pišinah, Lake 101.
Pitaona 86.
Pitaras the "Fathers" of Indian belief, 110; 120; 125; 126; 172; 174.
plants the fourth of the 7 creations (q.v.), sprung from the *urvarā* [*urvar*], the one original plant, 137-8; some plants also said to have sprung from the seed of the Uniquely-created Bull, 139; in pagan myth destruction of the *urvar* probably the prototype of the *haoma* offering, 141; in the Zoroastrian version the *urvar* is withered by Angra Mainyu, 231; pounded up by Amərətāt (q.v.), 138; she is the guardian of plants, 204; care for plants incumbent therefore on man, 297-8.
poetry of minstrels, 7; religious poetry, 7-9.
pollutis nocturna 206 n. 62; 306.
Pouručistā 188; 265.
Pourušaspa [Pourušasp] 182; 183; 277; 278; 279.

Prajāpati 141 n. 86.
prayer times and regulations for the 5 daily prayers, 258 ff.; the great prayers of Zoroastrianism, 260 ff.
priests professional training, 7-8; organisation of priesthood, 9-11; hereditary nature, 10-11; for Zoroastrian priests marriage obligatory, 188; necessary to be free from physical defects, 311; and to keep the laws of purity more strictly than the laity, 311; priests forbidden to eat food prepared by a layman, 311; strictest purity necessary for them during performance of rituals, 322-3; their garments, 322; Zoroaster as priest, 183-4; 186-7.
prophetic literature 287 ff.; 293.
propitiatory rites 171.
Pūitika [Pūdig] 145; 327.
Puraṇdhi 59.
purification ceremonies 311 ff.; in each of them a threefold process, 311-2; purification of the *pāvi* and ritual utensils, 322.
purity essential for acts of worship and prayer, 165-6, 310, 322-3.
purity laws 294 ff.; their final rigidity a barrier to the spread of Zoroastrianism, 295; in part an inheritance from pagan times, 294, 324; reinforced by Zoroaster's teachings, 294, 296 ff.; maintained down to modern times, 295.
Puruṣa 142.
Rāman [Rām] 60; 80-1; 330.
Rām Yašt 80.
Raṇha [Arang] 43; 100; 101; flows along the western boundary of Khvaniratha, 136; impossible to identify the original concept with any actual river, 143; later identified with the Jaxartes, 144.
Rapithwā [Rapithwin] "noon", the 2nd watch *(gāh)* of the Zoroastrian day, probably instituted by the prophet himself, 258-9; under the guardianship of Aša, 259; in winter, as Second Hāvani, protected instead by Mithra, 259.
Rapithwina [Rapithwin] personification of noon and lord of summer, 258-9; *hamkār* of Aša, 267.
Rašnu [Rašn] the "Judge", hypostasis of one function of Mithra's, 50, 203; holds the scales at the individual judgment, 240-1; will aid Pəšōtanu, 290, an *āfrinagān* dedicated to him and Arštāt jointly on the third night after death, 330.
resurrection in pagan belief, 179; according to Zoroaster's teachings postponed till Frašō.kərəti, 236, 237; will begin with the raising up of Gayō marətan, 201.
rhubarb a rhubarb plant generates Mašya and Mašyānag, 96; itself sprang from the seed of Gayō marətan, 97, 140.
Rigveda its approximate date, 3; the value of its testimony for pagan Iranian beliefs, 17-18.
rituals in paganism, 148 ff.; the "inner" and "outer" rituals of Zoroastrianism, 168-9, 322-3. (See also *āfrinagān*, *yasna*.)
rivāyats 295.
rivers 145-6.
Rudra 54-5; 83.
Rustam 80 n. 393; 101-2.
sacrifice as part of a covenant is under Mithra's protection, 29, 148; pagan concept of 3 prototype sacrifices giving life to the world, 141; adaptation of this concept in Zoroastrianism, 231; generic unity of sacrifices, 149; manifold intentions of pagan sacrifice, 147, 152 ff.; sacrifice and its rituals maintained by Zoroaster, 214-9.
(See also sacrifice, blood).
sacrifice, blood its importance, 149; its manner, 149 n. 12; offered both in connection with the *haoma* rite and separately, 160, 168-9, 173; concern for the soul of the victim, 149-50, 171; *spənta* wild creatures too must be ritually slain, 103, 150; blood sacrifice particularly significant in the worship of Mithra, 173; not rejected by Zoroaster, 214-6; offered generally by his community down to the 19th century, 215; has a *spənta* function, 231; enjoined for atonement in the *Vd.*, 302; the rite to continue until the last sacrifice at Frašō.kərəti, 244. (See also bull-sacrifice, horse-sacrifice, human sacrifice.)
sacrificial beast in Indo-Iranian times presumably cow or bull, 150; cows and bulls sacrificed by Irani Zoroastrians down to the 19th century, 150-1; cow sacrifice particularly associated with Arədvī Sūrā, 173; commonest offering in later times sheep or goat, 302 n. 43; no immature animal may be sacrificed, 297-8; nature of sacrificial beast occasionally stipulated in the worship of a particular divinity, 151; after an animal has been devoted to a *yazata*, no other may be substituted, 151.
sacrifier 148 n. 3.
Sada 175-6.
Saēna [Sēn] fabulous bird, the Persian Sīmurgh, 88-9; 138.
Saēna son of Ahūm.stūt, 266; 273.
sagdīd 303; 330 with n. 19.
Sāinu one of 5 Iranian tribes, 104; 250.
Sairima one of 5 Iranian tribes, 104; 250.
Sāma [Sām] 99
saošyant [sōšyant] a term used by Zoroaster of himself, 234; and of one coming

after him, 234-5; and generally, 235; occurs in the *Fravarānē*, 254, 256; the Saošyant, Astvat.ərəta, as cosmic Saviour, 282-4; the names of his virgin mother, 283, 285; no reason to identify him with Gayō.marətan, 284 n. 27; his 6 companions, 284; his 2 brothers, 284 ff.; born 57 years before Frašegird, 291; popular expectation remaining fixed on him as *the* Saošyant, 292-3; his legend firmly attached to the Hāmun Lake (see Kąsaoya) in Seistan, 293.
Sarasvatī 71; 72; 73.
Sarm [Salm] 104-5.
Satavaēsa [Sadwēs] 76; 77-8 with n. 375.
Saurva [Savol] 54-5; 83.
Savahi [Savah] 134; 135; 284.
seas 145.
Seistan [older Sakastan] Kərəsāspa's association with it late and unhistorical, 102; so also the link between it and the *kavis*, 274, 293. (See also Drangiana.)
shamanism 184 n. 17.
silkworm 299 n. 28.
sin the pagan Iranian concept, 87-8; involuntary sin of Kərəsāspa against fire, 103; concept of ritual sin surviving to some extent in Zoroastrianism, 103 n. 115; 294 ff.
sī-šūy, sī-šūr 312-3.
sky the first of the 7 creations (q.v.), 132-3; made of rock-crystal, classified as a metal, ibid.; under the guardianship of Khšathra (q.v.), 204. (See also Asmān.)
Snāvidhka 91; 102.
soma see haoma
soul see urvan
Spendārmad see Ārmaiti
Spend Nask 181.
Spāništa Mainyu 193.
spənta 196-7.
Spənta Mainyu [Spennāg Mēnōg] "Bounteous Spirit", in the *Gāthās* sometimes the power of Ahura Mazdā, sometimes a *yazata* hypostatizing this power, 193; in the tradition the first concept dominates, ibid.; as the Spirit of God protects man, the 6th creation, 211; should be in-dwelling in every man, 221.
Spəntōdhāta [Spentōdād, Persian Isfandiyār] 188; 281; 288.
Spitama 182.
Sraoša [Srōš] *yazata* of prayer, 60-2; linked with Mithra, 60, 203; in the *Gāthās*, 226-7; invoked by Zoroaster as "greatest of all", 226; one of the 3 divine beings who judge the individual soul, 240-1; protects the second night watch, Ušah, 259; the longer hymn to him largely modelled on the *Mihr Yašt*, 271; associated through Mithra with the blood sacrifice, 161 with n. 88; in later Zoroastrianism reverenced as Ahura Mazdā's vice-regent on earth, 271; looked to as protector against the evil of death, 328-30 with n. 12; will aid Pəšōtanu, 290.
Srīsōk see Hadhayans
Srit see Thrita
Srōš see Sraoša
Srōš Bāj 273 n. 90; 303; 309; 328.
Srūtat.fədhrī 285.
Sruvara 91; 102.
Staota yesnya [Stōt Yašt] 265-6.
still-birth 308; 321.
subterranean kingdom of the dead 92; 94; 109; 112; 115; 116; 117; the concept lies behind that of the Zoroastrian hell, 199; and of *Misvan Gātu*, 237.
sudra 258.
Sumēru see Mēru
sun associated with Mithra as lord of fire, 28-9; sometimes in Sasanian times identified with him, 69; draws the soul upwards after death, 113-4, 325, 328; preserves the seed of Gayō.marətan, 140. (See also Hvar.)
Surya 14; 69.
Syāvaršan [Siyāvakhš] 35; 106; 107.
Syāwbūm 145.
Taēra [Tērag] see Harā
Takhma Urupi [Takhmūraf, Tahmūras] 104.
tan ī pasēn 236 with n. 32.
temples unknown in Iranian paganism or early Zoroastrianism, 167.
Teštar see Tištrya
thirty the number of major *yazatas* in the Zoroastrian pantheon, 41 with n. 129.
Thraētaona [Frēdōn, Farēdōn] Indo-Iranian hero, 97-100; his most famous feat the conquest of Aži Dahāka (q.v.), 98, 283, 289; came to be associated with Varəna, 101; made one of the Pīšdādian "dynasty", 104; his 3 "sons" said to divide the world between them, 104-5.
three a significant and constantly recurring number in the cult, e.g. in funerary observances, 121, in the constitution of the *parahaoma*, 160, in purification rites, 311 ff.; found also in the threefold Zoroastrian ethic of good thoughts, words and deeds, 241, 258; and in myth and legend, e.g. Khvarənah and Yima, 43 n. 140, the 3 Saošyants, 284-5, the tribunal of 3 jndges, 240 with n. 47.
thrift 307 n. 78.
Thrita of the house of Āthwya, 97-100.
Thrita [Srit] hero of Kayanian times, 86; 98 n. 89.
Thrita son of Sāyuždrī, 98 n. 89.

Thwāša 59; 81.
Thworəštar 81-2.
time Zoroaster's concept of it, 230-3.
Tīragān 75-6; 176.
Tīri [Tīr] 75-7. (Cf. Tiur.)
Tīrmihr 76 n. 367.
Tīrō.nakathwa 76.
Tištrya [Teštar] 42; 74-8; fights against *pairikās*, 86; distributes the seeds of the Tree of All Seeds annually, 138; his need for worship, 147; stipulations about partaking of his *zaothras*, 166; *hamkār* of Haurvatāt, 267.
Tiur Armenian god, 77.
Traitana 99.
Tree of All Seeds 88-9; linked in the developed cosmogony with the original Plant, 138; the mythical development of a tree-cult, 143.
Tree of Seven Branches in the prophetic literature, 288.
tree-cult 143; 176.
tree-myths 138; 143.
Trita Āptya 98-9.
Tūirya, Tūra one of 5 Iranian tribes, 104, 250; later identified with the Turks, 105; foes of the Airyas under Frangrasyan (q.v.) and other warriors, 105, 107; Aši flees from them, 65.
*Tūr [Tūč] 104-5.
Tušnāmaiti 195; 228.
twin spirits 192-4.
Ukhšyat.ərəta [Ušēdar] 284; 290.
Ukhšyat.nəmah [Ušēdarmah] 284; 290.
Uniquely-created Bull see Gav aēvō.dāta
urine, cattle as a cleansing agent, 166; 296 with n. 7.
Urvākhšaya 97; 102.
urvan [ruvān] "soul", possessed by men and beneficent animals, 117; the concept tending to merge with that of the *fravaši* (q.v.), 119, 128; but a distinction still felt, 129; the *urvan* remaining somewhat separate during the first year after death, 120-1; different concepts of its destination, see *after-life*; rites for the departed linked with belief in a subterranean kingdom of the dead (q.v.), 120-4, 129.
urvarā [urvar] the original solitary Plant, 137. (See further under plants.)
Urvatat.nara 188; 281.
Us.həndava 136.
usig 12.
Ušah [Ušahin] the 5th watch *(gāh)* of the Zoroastrian day, from midnight till sunrise, 124; under the guardianship of Sraoša, 124, 259; probably instituted by Zoroaster himself, 259.
utensils for sacred rites, 168.
Uzayara [Uzērin] the 3rd watch *(gāh)* of the Zoroastrian day, but probably in pagan times the whole afternoon, 41, 258; under the guardianship of *Vouruna Apąm Napāt, ibid.; in Zoroastrianism from 3 p.m. till sunset, 258.
uzdāna 327 with n. 6.
Vahman see Vohu Manah
Vahman Yašt 287; 293.
Vahrām see Vərəthraghna
Vahrām Gōr 288.
*Valakhš 288.
Vanant 76; 78.
Vanant Yašt 78.
Vaŋhu.fədhrī 285.
Vaŋhvī Dāityā [Veh Dāitī, Veh Rōd] mythical river forming the eastern boundary of Khvaniratha, 136; bnt also flowing through Airyanəm Vaējah, 139, 144, 185 n. 21; impossible to identify the original concept with any actual river, 143; later identified with the Oxus, 144.
var of Yima 94-5; 290.
varas, varasya 159 n. 77.
Varuna 14; 31-7; 53-4. (Cf. *Vouruna.)
Vāsī Pančā.sadvarā 89.
vāta "wind" 75; 79.
Vāta [Vād] *yazata* of the wind, 79; *hamkār* of Haurvatāt, 267.
vayu "wind" 72; 79.
Vayu [Vāy] *yazata* of the breath of life and death, 79-80; in a late text a boon sought of him by Ahura Mazdā, 270; aids Kərəsāspa, 102 with n. 110.
vedi 166-7.
vegetarianism among Parsis, 302 n. 44.
Veh Dāitī, Veh Rōd see Vaŋhvī Dāityā
Vendidād [Av. Vī.daēva.dāta] 95; 274-5; 295 with n. 4.
Vərəthraghna [Vahrām, Persian Bahrām] *yazata* of Victory, 54; 62-5; 268; will aid Pəšōtanu, 280; and the Saošyant, 292.
Vīdadhafšu [Vīdadafš] 134; 135; 284.
Vīspa.taurvairī 285.
višap 91 n. 42.
Vīštāspa [Vīštāsp, Guštāsp] as "kavi", 11; a Naotara, 65; *khvarənah* dwelling with him, 67; one of the Kavyān dynasty, 105; accepting Zoroaster's teachings, 187; his battles for the faith, 188, 249; apparently the last of his line to rule, 249; his *fravaši* hououred in *Yašt* 13, 273; one tradition connects him with Balkh, 275-6; legends concerning his conversion, 279-81; his vision of the hereafter, 280; reigns over the age of gold, 288; receives a marvellous chariot from Srit, 98 n. 89.
Vīvaŋhvant 92; 97.
Vohu Manah [Vahman, Persian Bahman] leads the prophet into the presence of Ahura Mazdā, 185; personification of

"Good Intention", one of the 7 great Aməša Spəntas (q.v.), 203; guardian of the creation of cattle (q.v.), 204; his relationship to it, 209-11; his *hamkārs*, 267; his part at the miracnlous conception of the prophet, 277-8; at the conversion of Vīštāspa, 280.
Vouru.barəšti [Vourubarišn] 134; 135; 284.
Vouru.jarəšti [Vourujarišn] 134; 135; 284.
Vourukaša [Varkaš, Frākhvkard] 72; 74; 89; mythical sea, occupying one-third of the earth's surface, 135-6; all waters come from and return to it, 136; possible origin of the concept in an actual stretch of water, 143.
*Vouruna Apąm Napāt [~ Burj/Burz Yazad] 40-52; one of the three Ahuras (q.v.), 48, 52; invoked as the "High Lord", *ahura-bərəzant-*, 42; and as "the Ahura", 49-51, 58; his connection with *khvarənah*, 67; invoked by Zoroaster under the phrase "the other Ahuras", 195, 225; *hamkār* of Ārmaiti, as Mithra is of Khšathra, 267; honoured in the *Mihr Niyāyeš* and *Khoršēd Niyāyeš*, 272; protects the afternoon *gāh*, Uzayara, 41, 258.
Vṛtra 64; 92.
water associated through the ordeal with Varuṇa, 33-5, 46-7; source of wisdom, 73, 107; the second of the 7 creations (q.v.), lying all beneath the earth, 133; its source is from Harā, 135; is under the guardianship of Haurvatāt (q.v.), 204; the cult of water, 155-6, 160; care for it incumbent on man, 296-7. (See also Āpas.)
winter season of the "Fathers", 172, 174; the *daēvic* season, 259; 299 n. 28; 300.
wizārišn 232; 245.
wolf 279 with n. 9.
women in the pagan period, 66, 238; offered hope of salvation by Zoroaster, 251; *fravašis* of a group of women honoured in *Yašt* 13, 273; anomalies concerning woman's position in Zoroastrian literature, 308 n. 83; under the protection of Spənta Ārmaiti, 207 n. 66.
world year 285 ff.
worship main intentions of pagan Iranian worship, 239. (See also sacrifice.)
Wrath see Aēšma
writing unknown to the ancient Iranians, 7; its use for religious works long postponed, 20.
yajamāna 10; 148 n. 3.
Yama 92; 116.
Yamī 96.
yasna [jašn] the "act of worship", 156; the present rite probably combines two formerly separate rituals of *haoma*-offering, 159-60; may only be celebrated between sunrise and noon, 170; its especial significance in Zoroastrianism, 228; a spiritual *yasna* solemnised at creation, 230-1; and at Frašō.kərəti, 244.
Yasna Haptaŋhāiti its archaic character, 51, 58, 142; a liturgy to accompany offerings to fire and water, 150, 160, 165, 264; its revision under Zoroastrianism, 263-4; taking immutable form through being set amid the *Gāthās*, 265.
yašts hymns of praise, 8-9; dating of the great *yašts* to the 5th century B.C. has no basis, 20 n. 76; their revision under Zoroastrianism, 268-70; they have no place in the main acts of worship, 270.
yātu 85; 253.
yazata [yazad] "one worthy of worship", used of Ahura Mazdā himself, 192; general term for benign divinity, 194; not adequately to be rendered by either "god" or "angel", 196; the lesser *yazatas* acknowledged by Zoroaster as servants of Ahura Mazdā, 225 ff.; no rivalry between them, but a common striving, 267, 269; interdependent, but still distinguished by function, 268.
Yeŋhē hātąm 262 with n. 52; 265.
Yima Khšaēta [Jam, Jamšēd] deserted by Khvarənah, 67; lord of an underground kingdom and possibly of death, 84; also conceived of in Paradise, 116-7, 277; his legend, 92-6; the story of his *var* (q.v.) a contamination with Mesopotamian legend, 95; made one of the Pišdādian "dynasty", 104; his reign treated as a golden one, 289.
Yimak 96.
Ymir 142.
Yōišta 107.
Younger Avesta 17-18; 19-20.
yōždāthragar 317; 322.
Zairivairi [Zarēr] 188; 249.
Zāl 89; 101.
Zam *yazatā* of the Earth, 78; in pagan times perhaps invoked as *Zam suantā ārmati, 78; *hamkār* of Amərətāt, 267.
Zam Yašt, Zamyād Yašt 67; 78; 93; 274.
zand 130.
zaotar 5-6; *zaotar* poetry, 9; the learning of *zaotar* schools, 131, 146; Zoroaster a *zaotar*, 183-4.
zaothra [zōhr] 149; *zaothra* to fire, 153-4, 155; *zaothra* to water, 155-6; both made at the celebration of the *yasna*, 156; partaking of any *zaothra* forbidden to the unworthy, 166; how *zaothras* are conveyed to the divine beings, 162-3; not to be offered after dark, 170.
Zoroaster [Zarathuštra, Zardušt] his date, 3, 189, 190-1, 286 n. 38; his place, 3-4, 189; regarded as author of the whole Avesta, 130 with n. 3; his birth and life, 182 ff.; meaning of his name, 182-3; a priest, 183-4, 186-7, 214, 223; his wives and children, 188; his teachings, 192 ff.; maintained many of the beliefs and rituals of his forefathers, 214 ff., 224-5; these underlie his own particular doctrines, 219-20, 246; to perform rites meritorious, 241; universal nature of his message, 251; nature of his opposition to the *daēvas*, 201, 252, 255, 279; one tradition connects him with Balkh, 275-6; legends of his miraculous birth, 277 ff.; only child ever to laugh at birth, 279; his 3 legendary sons, the Saošyants, 282 ff.; creation of his own *fravaši* initiated the work of salvation, 286; his birth ushered in the 10th millennium, 288, 289.
zurvān "time" 230 n. 7; its deification a late development, ibid.
Zurvān *yazata* of time, a minor figure in the later Avesta, 81; not to be identified with a local Hurrian divinity in the Nuzi tablets, 14 n. 52; heretically conceived in Achaemenian times as father of the twin Spirits, 193; unlikely to be an ancient god, 199 n. 34.